



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
March 20 – 27, 2014

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture
Aboriginal Business & Finance
Aboriginal Community Development
Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement
Aboriginal Education & Youth
Aboriginal Health
Aboriginal Identity & Representation
Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty
Aboriginal Jobs & Labour
Aboriginal Politics
Aboriginal Sports
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources
Land Claims & Treaty Rights
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Story adapted from Cree legend aims to preserve culture

Judith Silverthorne adapted her book, *Honouring the Buffalo*, from an elder's telling of a Cree legend

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 22, 2015 9:36 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 22, 2015 9:36 AM CT



Author Judith Silverthorne reads to a group at the Indian Métis Christian Fellowship Centre in Regina during her book launch for *Honouring the Buffalo*. (Tory Gillis/CBC)

"The grandfather watched the herd pound across the prairie toward them," Author Judith Silverthorne reads aloud from her new book, *Honouring the Buffalo*. It's a Cree legend adapted from an oral story from elder Ray Lavallee of Piapot First Nation.

A room full of people gathered Saturday at the Indian Métis Christian Fellowship building in Regina to hear the story at Silverthorne's book launch. The words are enriched with artwork by Mike Keepness, projected on the wall behind her as she reads.

Silverthorne says it's an honour to bring Lavallee's words and his respect for the buffalo to the next generations. She's particularly excited about it reaching people who don't know much about the buffalo's history with Plains Cree people. She says it's important that people share the history of their culture, whatever their background.

"Even for myself, our ancestors are getting older. A lot of them have passed on," Silverthorne said.

"They're gone. Everybody's getting older and the stories are going with them."

Silverthorne said it was somewhat intimidating to be tasked with making it into a book. She started with Lavallee's oral storytelling.

"And then I had to figure out how to write it to capture exactly what he said," she explained.

She said it was a relief when it was made into a book and Lavallee enjoyed her version. It's written in English with Cree translations in a simplified way aimed at appealing to kids.

"The idea is we want the youth to understand as well and to be able to know how wonderful the buffalo was."

Silverthorne says the book is about preserving history and culture. It does that itself in adapting and publishing Lavallee's telling of the Cree legend.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/story-adapted-from-cree-legend-aims-to-preserve-culture-1.3004738>

Dance Festival a Brilliant, Growing Showcase of Native Culture

[Hans Tammemagi](#)

3/22/15

When darkness falls, the Museum of Anthropology, a sprawling building at the edge of the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, transforms into a mystical dreamland. Dramatic lighting highlights towering totems, the thick beams of a big house and large canoes. Long, mysterious shadows crisscross the floor. It is like entering a world of myths and legends.

With goose bumps I took my place for the signature evening performance at the Coastal First Nations Dance Festival, which is presented by the Museum of Anthropology and the Dancers of the Damelahamid and celebrates the stories, songs and dances of the Indigenous Peoples of the northwest coast of North America. A glance around the Great Hall showed that every seat was taken. Elder Larry Grant from the Musqueam First Nation, on whose traditional territory the Museum is situated, had a place of honor in the front row. A few young Native men in the audience wore cedar hats and red button-blanket vests.

Suddenly drums reverberated, pounding and intense, and the Squamish Eagle Song Dancers snaked amongst the audience and onto the low stage, singing and drumming. With only 200 seats, each one close to the stage, there was an intimacy, a closeness with

the performers. Of their four dances, the Eagle Song was most captivating, as it portrayed the transformation of the eagle with dancers wearing three large, colorful eagle masks.

The Rainbow Creek dancers from Haida Gwaii wore wonderful regalia, including many large carved masks, some with large beaks that would clacked loudly to the singing beat. The group included two youngsters, a shy girl of about four and a baby of less than a year. The dances, which have been passed on for generations, carried audience members into the supernatural world.



The regalia and the dances transported the audience into other worlds. Here, one of the Dancers of the Damelahamid. (Photo: Derek Dix)

Adding to the intimacy was the fact that each dance group consisted primarily of extended families, said executive and artistic director of the Dancers of the Damelahamid Margaret Grenier.

“It’s satisfying to express oneself in a meaningful, artistic way, and, at the same time, to also build close family ties,” she said, herself wearing a traditional cedar hat and attractive black button blanket trimmed in red and white fur. This sentiment was echoed by her son, Nigel, and husband, Andy, who also dance in the Damelahamid group, which is from the Gitxan First Nation of the northwest coast of British Columbia.

“When my parents, Ken and Margaret Harris, started this festival in 1967 in Prince Rupert, they had to borrow the regalia from museums,” Grenier said in describing the festival’s history.

She is proud that since then the festival and the Damelahamid Dancers have grown significantly. This is the eighth year that the event has been held at the spectacular Museum of Anthropology. This year the Festival spanned six days, from March 3 to 8, and the signature events were all sold out.

Other Native groups are encouraged to participate as well, and performers came from as far as the Yukon, Arizona and Alaska. In the past, international groups from New Zealand, Australia and Peru have shared the stage, helping link indigenous dance cultures

around the world. The festival also encourages young people by holding workshops and educational seminars.

The Damelahamid troupe has flourished in its artistic expression as well as in the public support it receives. They are British Columbia's only professional indigenous dance group. They practice diligently, develop new dances and go on tour, having performed in places as far away as Shanghai and Ecuador. Currently they are preparing for the "[Made in B.C.](#)" tour, the first Native group ever to be invited to participate in this initiative that connects dance artists and presenters from around the province.

Still, there are challenges.

"Most difficult is capacity," Grenier said. "We still rely a great deal on volunteers. Organizing finances and people is time consuming. But it's very satisfying to see the continuing growth, seeing indigenous dance moving forward every year."

The evening closed with a set by nine Damelahamid dancers wearing striking red-and-black button-blanket regalia. Their hand and body movements were dramatic and in perfect coordination with the beating drums and singing. Carved wooden masks and costumes reflected the central beings in the Mountain Goat Dance, the Warrior Song and the Flicker Dance. For their exit song, they drummed and sang as they wended their way out through the audience.

A magical evening had come to a close. But it was a happy ending, for it showed that indigenous west-coast culture is thriving, and has a strong champion in the Damelahamid Dancers.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/22/dance-festival-brilliant-growing-showcase-native-culture-159697>

New Edmonton arena will showcase renowned aboriginal artist

By [Claire Theobald](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Monday, March 23, 2015 08:29 PM MDT | Updated: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 07:50 AM MDT

When world-renowned aboriginal artist Alex Janvier was selected to create a mosaic installation for Edmonton's new downtown arena, Paul Moulton, executive director for the Edmonton Arts Council, said the decision was easy.

"There is no one better to capture the spirit of Edmonton's deep history," Moulton said.

Janvier was born on a reserve in the Cold Lake First Nation in Northern Alberta in 1935, of both Dene Suline and Saulteaux descent, but was sent to the Blue Quills Indian Residential School near St. Paul at the age of eight.

To help cope with his suffering, Janvier turned to art.

"It would be good to see our young generation getting into art, like Alex did," said Bernice Martial, grand chief of Treaty 6 territory and a member of the same Cold Lake First Nation who grew up knowing Janvier.

Janvier said it was an honour to have his piece- a 1,600-square foot circular tile and glass mosaic titled Tsa tsa ke k'e (Iron Foot Place) that will span nearly 14 metres across- in the new Rogers Place arena not just because the Winter Garden will be a shared space attracting an estimated 1.4 million people every year, but because he is a huge hockey fan, playing until he was 63.

"I'm glad to be a participant, as an artist, and to be able to offer something that will be added to the success of the arena," Janvier said.

With abstract flowing lines and bright colours evoking the natural elements of the greater Edmonton area, Iron Foot Place is in line with his signature style described as a blend of abstract images with bright and symbolic colours.

This latest work adds to an impressive list of pieces that have been prominently displayed around the world, including Morning Star in the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa, and other works in galleries as far as France, Sweden, Brazil and throughout the United States.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/03/23/new-edmonton-arena-will-showcase-renowned-aboriginal-artist>

TV Nunavut: could it really happen?

Society preps CRTC application for territory-wide educational channel

PETER VARGA, March 24, 2015 - 2:30 pm



The TV Nunavut Educational Broadcast Society hopes to create a Nunavut-wide educational channel that all households of the territory can pick up. Content would include productions by the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, such as *Qanurli?*, a comedy show geared toward Inuit youth. (COURTESY OF IBC)



A scene from IBC's long-running children's show *Takuginai* — the kind of Inuktitut educational content Nunavut TV would hope to include in its roster. (COURTESY OF IBC)

A group of television and film producers behind a project to create TV Nunavut, a territory-wide network devoted to broadcasting Nunavut and Inuit-made programming, posted a milestone this month.

The TV Nunavut Educational Broadcast Society learned late last week that their promise to deliver educational content for the territory would guarantee them a place in basic cable packages.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission announced March 19 that cable companies must provide a basic package of channels at no more than \$25 a month.

These must include local stations, educational and accessibility channels such as legislative assembly broadcasts, and mandatory channels such as APTN and CPAC.

“If TV Nunavut is successful at getting an application approved with the CRTC, that means it would be available on direct home, and cable too,” said Jerry Giberson, broadcast and telecommunications consultant for the TV Nunavut society.

The CRTC announcement marked a small victory, but perhaps the biggest one so far for the group, which formally incorporated as the “TV Nunavut Education Broadcast Society” one year ago.

Last September the society appeared at the CRTC's Let's Talk TV hearings in Ottawa. The thrust of the group's presentation was that educational broadcasters "should be must-carry," Giberson said.

Once it earns its license to broadcast, TV Nunavut would be classified as a "regional educational broadcaster," and as such would be transmitted into all Nunavut households that have a TV, Giberson said.

"We're happy to see that the CRTC listened to the message about educational broadcasters," said TV Nunavut society chair Charlotte DeWolff, who presented at the fall 2014 hearings.

The society's next steps are to build more support and secure funding for the future TV channel. The group hopes to gather all the necessary requirements to complete and submit its application with the CRTC this year, DeWolff said.

Once licensed, TV Nunavut will have access to funding that could allow it to be up and running by early 2017.

The new station will be a distributor of made-in-Nunavut programming, not a producer.

DeWolff said that means sourcing programs from Nunavut's biggest TV producer, the Iqaluit-based Inuit Broadcasting Corp., which has long supported the idea of a regional broadcaster for Nunavut.

"We don't want to compete with the production [companies] at all," DeWolff said. "We want to be a distributor of programming that's produced in the communities, by independent film producers, and maybe even by some of the community TV channels or film societies."

The idea of an educational Nunavut-wide TV channel was [born in 2007](#), DeWolff said, when IBC cautioned the Nunavut government that Inuit-language television programming was in decline.

Then, as is the case today, APTN was the only Nunavut-wide broadcaster of Inuit language programs.

"We were talking about Inuit languages' loss," DeWolff said.

"That's where the seed for the idea of a regional broadcaster came about."

DeWolff and other TV Nunavut board members said the decline of Inuktitut programming continues to this day.

As a national broadcaster, APTN has expanded its offer of programming in other aboriginal languages over the years.

“The aboriginal-language production industry in southern Canada has grown immensely, mostly due to APTN,” said Debbie Brisebois, executive director of IBC and board member of TV Nunavut.

“When APTN started, there was a lot of room for the Inuktitut language. And now there’s lots of producers out there working in Mohawk, Cree, Ojibway,” she said. “So the competition for time slots is certainly a lot more intense.”

IBC produces five shows in Inuktitut for APTN. One of them, a children’s program called Takuginai, won’t air next season. New Takuginai episodes will appear online only.

“The whole reason behind TV Nunavut is the language,” DeWolff said — to promote and preserve Inuktitut.

Nunavummiut also want a regional station where they can see programming that is relevant to the territory. Added to that, TV Nunavut may also offer programs from outside the territory “versioned” into Inuktitut.

For example, DeWolff once heard elders say they would love to see David Suzuki’s CBC production, *The Nature of Things*, produced in the Inuit language.

“It’s not just a matter of connecting people within the territory, but offering a connection to the outside world, for unilinguals,” she said.

This could even include exchanges with other northern regions.

“We’re hoping to form alliances down the road, with the circumpolar world, for an exchange of programming,” DeWolff said.

Protection of the Inuit language is becoming more of a challenge, said Karliin Aariak, vice chair of TV Nunavut.

“There’s so much exposure to English,” she said.

With that, it’s become more important to “have a network to showcase who we are, to reflect on ourselves, to have the ability to express ourselves through TV or film, and to have an avenue to do it in our language.”

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674tv_nunavut_could_it_really_happen/

Miss Universe contender hopes to share her aboriginal culture in pageant

Shawn Logan, QMI Agency

First posted: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 07:20 PM EDT | Updated: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 07:38 PM EDT



Cree Big Plume, 24, poses on Tuesday March 24, 2015. She is the only Aboriginal candidate from Calgary in the Miss Universe Canada pageant.

CALGARY - The last time Cree Big Plume was on stage, she was upset about having to don a polar bear costume instead of being chosen to play Mrs. Claus.

Many years after her grade school disappointment, the 24-year-old from Tsuu T'ina First Nation near Calgary will take the stage again in May. This time, she'll be one of a handful of contestants representing Alberta at the Miss Universe Canada pageant in Toronto.

"This is my one and only pageant," said Big Plume, who tried out for Miss Universe with no thoughts of being chosen to compete, and is now one of 65 women vying to represent her nation on the world stage.

"I didn't have any intentions of following through with this, I just wanted to see what it was about."

Before she knew it, Big Plume was chosen to participate in the pageant, with the goal of moving on to represent Canada in the Miss Universe showdown.

Big Plume, who says she was the shy girl in the back of the classroom growing up in the Calgary separate school system, said telling the story of her people to Canada and the world motivated her to take the next step.

"That chance to share the experiences, beliefs and values of my community with the world," she said. "Getting that phone call (from the scout) was a life-changing experience."

Big Plume began modelling through a Calgary agency when she was 16 -- an experience she says helped her grow as a person and boost her self-esteem.

She's taken those lessons to impart to youth on her reserve, hoping to help overcome the hurdles that many face.

Meanwhile, Big Plume is going to Mount Royal University and hopes to become a veterinarian. She is also fundraising for Operation Smile, a charity that raises funds for surgery for children born with cleft palates and cleft lips in developing countries.

With the pageant -- which runs May 15-24 -- drawing closer, Big Plume said she is becoming more confident every day.

"Needless to say, I'm going to win, and when I win my plan is to keep going and complete my dreams," she said.

"But win or lose, I believe this has been an amazing experience."

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/03/24/miss-universe-contender-hopes-to-share-her-aboriginal-culture-in-pageant>

Art with purpose

By: Jared Story

Posted: 03/24/2015 1:44 PM |



Cree-Ations founder and principal fashion designer Edna Nabess (centre) admires artwork by her son, Cree-Ations owner Keith Proulx (right) and employee Tim Dermek.

When life gives you leather, make moccasins.

Edna Nabess has always been resourceful. At age 11, while living in Cormorant, Man., located just north of The Pas, Nabess started her first business, filleting fish for tourists. Her hunting/fishing guide grandfather made her a box to stand on so she could access the cleaning station.



One of the creations found at Cree-Ations.

So, when Nabess, now a young Cree woman, found herself single with five children to support, she started making moccasins, a craft she learned from her grandmother.

She started with a small shop in Winkler, and then opened White Feather Creations in The Pas in 2001, a business her oldest son Robert still runs.

In 2007, Nabess brought her fashion and craft operation to Winnipeg, starting Cree-Ations in Garden City Shopping Centre, before moving the business to its current location at 1346 Main St. in 2010.

"I started the business in 2007 with a few pairs of slippers," Nabess said. "I was a touring co-ordinator for the Manitoba Arts Network and I knew a lot of artists, so I asked them if they would want to come in and show some of their work. In two weeks we made our first month's rent."

About six months ago, Nabess and her son Keith Proulx opened a second Cree-Ations location at 586 Main St. Nabess and Proulx said the new spot, on the corner of Main Street and Alexander Avenue in Chinatown, will soon be its sole store.

Like his mom, Proulx is a self-starter. He said he made his first pair of slippers at age seven and was working the front of the store in Winkler by age eight. Now, he's the owner of Cree-Ations, while his mother serves as the principal fashion designer.

"I know how to do pretty much everything, from sewing slippers and mukluks to making jackets and dresses. I do a lot of the detail work on dresses," said Proulx, 27. "I make dreamcatchers, I paint, I carve, I (make) pretty much everything because we need to have stuff to fill up the store.

"People come in and say 'Can you make this?' and I will say 'Well, I never have, but I could.'"

Proulx, who plays in Winnipeg metal bands Forged in Fire and Tyrant's Demise, said he's trying to pass on that adventurous spirit. Cree-Ations new location not only serves as an art store, it's an artist showcase, with crafters creating pieces on full display.

"Some of them I'm trying to mentor, help them down their path. I have materials to no end so I'll give them ideas and supply them with some material and we work out the costs after," Proulx said.

"I'm just trying to get more people doing this and feeling comfortable with it."

Proulx said making art is a therapeutic and empowering process, one that connects him with his Cree heritage. Still, because of him and his mother's complexion — "pasty" as Proulx calls it — they sometimes receive some unfair criticism.

"Most Aboriginal people that come in open up to us," Proulx said. "They look way past our colour. But, some come in and say 'What's this? This isn't traditional.' I'm like 'Excuse me? Not traditional? Did you park your dog sled at the Perimeter?'"

Nabess and Proulx refuse to be discouraged. Nabess said she is the product of parents and grandparents who prided themselves on doing the best with what they had.

"Everything had a purpose. Nothing went to waste," Nabess said. "We have a big bucket of, people call them scraps, but that's our profit sitting there. Nothing ever goes to waste.

"That's what being an artist is all about, being creative."

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/times/Art-with-purpose-297419641.html>

Tea still a drink of choice on James Bay coast

By [Xavier Kataquapit](#), The Daily Press-freelance

Thursday, March 26, 2015 12:41:15 EDT AM



Xavier Kataquapit

TIMMINS - Tea has been a part of the diet of Aboriginal people all across North America since the coming of the Europeans.

I grew up drinking tea from the time I was a baby, which was the norm for Cree families up the coast. This drink was considered a must in every Cree household and it was shared in a very social way.

There was always a huge pot of tea on our stove and it was kept hot and replenished all day.

Today we know tea in so many handy bag forms and we can purchase black, green, caffeinated, non caffeinated and a number of products based on flowers and herbs. In general the standard teas are caffeinated and have been used as a sort of energy drink over many years.

It was always considered a healthy drink and could warm a person up in cold, damp weather and it provided a bit of a spark of energy when needed. A hot cup of tea for my people was comforting and often it was shared in social circles out on the land around a fire or back home at the kitchen table.

China was the original tea producer and exporter. Tea came primarily from China until the beginning of the 19th century when India and Sri Lanka also became major tea exporters world wide under the colonial management of the British and various other European countries.

I recall my parents explaining that during the 1940s and 50s tea came loose leaf in cans and packages. They talked about buying tea from the Hudson Bay Company that was scooped from large wooden crates into bags. Tea was cheap, easy to carry and something to look forward to when my people were out on the land in the wilderness. In the 1960s tea was formatted into handy little bags which made it even easier to consume.

Today tea is still a popular drink among my people, the Cree of James Bay. However, it is a drink preferred mainly by the elders while younger people like to consume coffee. Coffee has replaced tea in many homes back up the coast but it still has a place when my people are out on the land. Tea is still the drink of choice when people are gathered

around a campfire. I have often found that I prefer tea for its more subtle spark of energy as compared to the jolt that coffee provides. Many times over the years when I have not felt well I always turned to tea and a little toast or bread to see me through a flu or cold.

Tea is still considered a more or less healthy drink and in the last few decades ice tea has become popular in the summer in North America. Ice tea is found just about everywhere these days as an alternative to soda drinks but this tea includes a huge amount of sugar. People tend to think that ice tea is more healthy than soda pop but in reality if you read the ingredient labels you will find that the sugar added is equivalent to popular sodas.

One thing you won't find anywhere on tea package labels is the content of pesticide residue that is found in most teas. Tea is grown in many countries these days where there are no strict guidelines and restrictions on the use of pesticides. These toxic pesticides are used to ensure good crop yields of tea plants and although this works well in terms of production it also makes the resulting tea produced more unhealthy.

In research by expert analysis over the past few years it has been found that many tea products exceed the safe amount of pesticides as set out by Canadian regulations.

This does not mean that tea in moderate amounts will cause problems for people however we need to be cautious not to consume too much of this cherished drink in our diet. We also have to educate ourselves to understand which products have the less amount of pesticides so that we can make good choices.

You can Google tea and pesticide concerns and find out for yourself what the analysis point out. There was also a CBC Marketplace show that featured this issue.

I'm not a tea teetotaller, but even that is in moderation.

Direct Link: <http://www.timminspress.com/2015/03/25/tea-still-a-drink-of-choice-on-james-bay-coast>

Winnipeg gallery carves out space for Inuit art collection

By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press Posted: Mar 26, 2015 11:48 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 26, 2015 1:53 PM CT



The Winnipeg Art Gallery currently has the largest collection of Inuit art in the world. (CBC)

Winnipeg's art gallery is trying to carve out space to house what's billed as the world's largest public collection of Inuit art — only a fraction of which is ever on display.

The gallery has plans to build a \$60-million building for 13,000 pieces that include carvings, prints and drawings. The centre would include a climate-controlled "visible vault" of the collection, which the gallery says would be the first of its kind in North America and would offer education programs about the North.

Gallery director Stephen Borys said the 3,700-square-metre centre would be unique and would help bring the Arctic to the rest of Canada, considered the "deep south" to those in the North. The centre would raise the profile of "an art-making culture that, per-capita, is unparalleled in the world," Borys said.

"There are communities where 20 to 30 per cent of the community are art makers," he said Thursday.

"The art makers, who are behind these incredible objects, will have a platform, a voice and a way to communicate more of the land that they come from — the land that very, very few Canadians ever get the chance to visit."



"The Inuit Art Centre will be an innovative programming hub that celebrates Inuit art and Indigenous cultures through exhibitions, research, education, and art making," Stephen Borys, Winnipeg Art Gallery director and CEO, said in a release. (CBC)

The gallery has a long way to go before shovels are in the ground. Although its funding request was recently turned down by the city, TD Bank announced a \$500,000 donation Thursday to help fund an artist-in-residence and a printmaking studio.

It could be a few years before the centre becomes a reality, Borys said.

"It's something that will take a lot of money, a lot of support," he said. "There will be a building. We know it's going to happen."

Once built, the gallery will finally be able to display the pieces that make up half its permanent collection. Of the 13,000 pieces of Inuit art held in trust by the gallery, only about 100 are ever on public display at any one time.

There are also plans to store the collection digitally so it is internationally accessible.

The idea is welcomed by many in the Inuit community who would like to see a permanent place for Canadians to explore authentic Inuit culture. Fred Ford, head of the Manitoba Inuit Association, said art is an integral part of Inuit history, noting his people didn't have a written language until recently.

"This is how we've told our history and passed it on from generation to generation," he said. "These are our stories and this is our history."

Many people may not be aware of what goes into a carving, Ford added. The stone is harvested from the land, dug out of bedrock dozens of kilometres from home.

The fully displayed collection will provide a window on the way of life in the North for people around the world, Ford said.

"We want to tell the full story and really the reason behind the art."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-gallery-carves-out-space-for-inuit-art-collection-1.3010739>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

One Arrow First Nation business club after Dragons' Den help

Almightyvoice Education Centre's Business Club members learn new skills

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 20, 2015 1:32 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 20, 2015 1:35 PM CT



(Left to right) Creedance Thomas, Gabriel Thorn, and William Sanderson are members of the Almightyvoice Education Centre's Business Club. (Rachel Bergen/CBC)

A group of high school students from One Arrow First Nation are hoping to get a "Dragon"-sized boost to their business.

The Almightyvoice Education Centre's Business Club is developing a product to prevent snow from covering sewer vents on roofs. The device is a plastic extension that prevents snow from covering the vent and causing odour and methane gas build up.

The students made the hour drive south to Saskatoon today to shoot a video to submit to CBC's Dragons' Den about the product. They talked about how the project has had a positive impact on their lives.

"It showed me how to speak and talk for myself, actually, because I used to be shy before this business club came to our school," 18-year-old Creedance Thomas said. "Now, I'm learning how to talk for myself and speak in front of a lot of people."



Program coordinator Joe Taylor holds one of the sewer vent extensions. (Rachel Bergen/CBC)

Program coordinator Joe Taylor is proud of his students' growth.

"They're a great group of kids, they want to better themselves, they want to better their community," Taylor said.

"They want to set some goals and some dreams. At the end of the day, they're a great group of kids that need a break in life. If we can offer that break to one or two of them or the full group of them, that's a sense of accomplishment for me."

They've already sold 280 of the \$16 devices on the First Nation and are now seeking a patent.

The group isn't sure of how much it will be asking the dragons for yet. They're waiting to see if other First Nations would like to purchase them before setting a number.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/one-arrow-first-nation-business-club-after-dragons-den-help-1.3003479>

Let First Nations tax tobacco

It will combat illegal smuggling and provide needed revenue for reserves and the government

Christian Leuprecht, Guest Columnist

First posted: Saturday, March 21, 2015 07:00 PM EDT | Updated: Saturday, March 21, 2015 12:01 PM EDT



Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa. (Craig Robertson/Toronto Sun files)

With so many severe fiscal challenges facing Ontario, the government will be looking for any source of revenue it can find when it delivers its provincial budget in the weeks ahead.

That's why Premier Kathleen Wynne's government signalled in December's fiscal update it hopes to recoup massive tax revenues lost from the sale of contraband cigarettes, which now account for one-in-three cigarettes smoked in the province.

An Ontario government estimate from 2008 pegged tax losses from contraband cigarettes at \$500 million annually.

By 2012, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimated that losses to Ontario's coffers had mounted into the range of \$689 million to \$1.1 billion per year.

That's a lot of money to leave on the table for a government whose stated priority is to tackle the budget deficit.

The province is to be commended for wanting to crack down on tobacco smuggling, which has many negative implications for public health and border security, in addition to lost revenues.

But the government can't do this alone and it should find a willing partner in Ontario's First Nations.

Akwesasne (near Cornwall), Oshweken/Six Nations (near Brantford) and to a lesser extent Tyendinaga (near Belleville) have been identified as hotspots for cigarette manufacturing and smuggling.

A report by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimated as little as 21% of allocation cigarettes sold on Ontario reserves in 2011 were properly taxed.

Why? For complex historical and political reasons, the Ontario Tobacco Tax Act, the federal Excise Act and the Criminal Code provisions relating to contraband tobacco are not enforced in Ontario.

Some First Nations people refuse to collect the provincial tax, while others believe that the federal excise tax infringes on treaties.

A solution for First Nations and other levels of government is a new taxation strategy that strikes a better balance between the interests of First Nations looking to maintain their cultural and economic ties to tobacco, and the interests of public health, non-Native cigarette manufacturers, and government revenue.

It's time to give First Nations control of taxation on cigarettes and let them use the funds to support their own communities. There is precedent for this, although some First Nations prefer to collect "fees" rather than taxes.

Legislation in Kahnawake now requires a "Contribution Stamp" to be purchased and affixed to "all tobacco products imported, exported or manufactured within, from or to Mohawk Territory of Kaehnewake."

Proceeds from Contribution Stamps flow to the newly-established Kahnawake Community Contribution Fund.

Similarly, the band council of Tyendinaga has introduced a \$2- per-carton fee on cigarettes with the funds used for community development projects.

Aboriginal people are determined to be part of the solution.

A First Nations Excise Tax that is equal to or slightly less than the provincial excise tax to non-Native customers reduces the price gap with cigarettes off reserves.

It reduces the incentives for smuggling and all the social ills that go with it.

Sharing revenue with First Nations communities encourages compliance and enforcement.

It not only helps First Nations, it helps fight the deficit.

— *Leuprecht, a contraband tobacco researcher, is a senior fellow with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada and Queen's University.*

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/03/21/let-first-nations-tax-tobacco>

Indigenous teahouse opens in Vancouver

By [David La Riviere](#)

Sunday, March 22, 2015 6:42:09 PDT PM



From left to right, Cease Wyss, Senaqwila Wyss, Paisley Nahanee and Michelle Nahanee recently opened up Capilano Herbal Apothecary in Vancouver. (Nadya Kwandibens, submitted)

A new teahouse that opened this weekend in Vancouver's East Village is sharing traditional First Nations' herbal teas with the city in the hopes of changing the way people think about indigenous businesses.

The Capilano Herbal Apothecary is run by two mother-and-daughter pairs who are Squamish First Nation. It was named after the Capilano Indian Reserve in North Vancouver.

“It’s really our time as indigenous people to shine in both worlds,” said Michelle Nahanee, co-owner. “So we can have our culture and we can be involved in business and commerce and it doesn’t make us less indigenous.”

It started as a way to pass on traditional indigenous medicinal knowledge in a modern and inclusive setting.

“We want people to come and learn and connect to the land through us and with us. We’re an indigenous business but we want everyone to be interested,” Nahanee said.

All the herbs used in the teas are foraged, grown in community gardens or bought from local suppliers of organic produce. Many of the herbs are grown and harvested by co-owner and in-house herbal medicine expert, Cease Wyss.

Wyss has been making traditional indigenous herbal medicines and bringing them to pow wows and craft fairs for 20 years.

“This has been a dream for a long time to have a tea house. Where people can just come and socialize, hangout and drink tea,” Wyss said.

“Being able to taste it was always something that couldn’t really happen at craft fairs. Now people can actually taste something or sniff the jars and see what they think.”

Direct Link: <http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2015/03/22/indigenous-teahouse-opens-in-vancouver>

Indigenous business forum promotes economic growth

By Scott Larson, The StarPhoenix March 24, 2015



Gary Merasty speaks at the World Indigenous Business Forum press conference in the English River Business Complex with, from left, FSIN Vice-Chief Gary Arcand, Rosa Walker (president and CEO of Indigenous Leadership Development Institute), Mayor Don Atchison and Louis Gardiner, treasurer for the Metis Nation Saskatchewan, Tuesday. (Michelle Berg / The StarPhoenix)

The 2016 World Indigenous Business Forum (WIBF) in Saskatoon will be a platform to showcase the city and what it has to offer as well as offer local indigenous groups the opportunity to connect with groups from around the world, say organizers of the event.

More than 1,200 delegates from across the globe are expected to attend the WIBF in the summer of 2016. The forum brings together indigenous business leaders to help foster relationships, increase international trade and encourage aboriginal participation in business and economic development.

“I think you will find this is a different kind of conference,” said Rosa Walker, president and CEO of the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute, which founded WIBF.

“It is a very interactive conference,” she said. “We are all in the same room together. There are no breakout rooms or workshops.”

The conference is expected to generate \$2 million in direct economic benefits to the city and a similar amount in indirect economic benefits.

“We have a group of indigenous people who are running a conference, global in scale, who are doing it on their own,” Walker said. “It demonstrates we have the knowledge, we have the skill and we have the expertise to be able to do something of this magnitude.”

The conference is meant to not only be a networking event, but one where the seeds for concrete business deals are planted.

“Our whole goal is not only to create a network, but to get something meaningful out of it,” Walker said. “(For example) we were able to introduce an aboriginal group from Chile to Westbank First Nation (in B.C.) and as a result they are now entering into a partnership to do some solar energy projects.”

Milton Tootoosis, director of livelihood and chair of the Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network, said Saskatoon is an ideal venue for the WIBF.

“I think we have all the amenities and the capacity and the facilities,” Tootoosis said. “What people are going to see is the economic benefits of the urban reserves, the migration of more aboriginal people to the city and their contributions to the economy.”

The total cost of the conference is between \$500,000 to \$600,000. Money will be raised through sponsorships, and the City of Saskatoon is contributing \$150,000.

As part of the Saskatoon WIBF, an International Indigenous Music and Cultural Festival will be launched and is targeted to become an annual event in the city.

“We will try to highlight a lot of the local acts,” said Curtis Standing, chair of the festival.

Performers will include world-class round dance singers, powwow singers as well as a feature act every evening from places such as Australia or South America.

There will be fashion designers, arts and crafts and a trade show component.

“We are using the WIBF as sort of a launching point for the Indigenous Music and Cultural Festival,” Standing said.

The first WIBF was held in 2010 in New York and has also been held in Sydney, Australia, Windhoek, Namibia, Guatemala City and this October the conference will be in Oahu, Hawaii.

Saskatoon was up against cities in Australia, Norway, The Netherlands as well as Calgary to host the 2016 event.

Walker said Saskatoon’s presentation highlighted the economy along with the partnerships among governments and indigenous peoples.

“They did an incredible showcase of what Saskatoon has to offer,” she said.

The honorary co-chairs of the event are Chief Darcy Bear of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Marty Klyne, a business leader who is currently a sessional lecturer at the First Nations University of Saskatchewan.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/Indigenous+business+forum+promotes+economic+growth/10916152/story.html>

Indigenous leaders get down to business

World forum coming to city in 2016

By Scott Larson, The Starphoenix March 26, 2015 10:40 AM



Gary Merasty speaks at the World Indigenous Business Forum press conference Tuesday in the English River Business Complex with, from left, Saskatoon Tribal Council Vice-Chief Mark Arcand, president and CEO of the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Rosa Walker, Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and Louis Gardiner, treasurer for the Metis.

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Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/Indigenous+leaders+down+business/10917724/story.html>

First Nations entrepreneurs think outside the box



Nanaimo carver Tom Simpson, left, and Campbell River's Tom Sewid teamed up to create a red cedar casket with a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw orca design. The casket is on display at Boyd's Funeral Home.

by [J.R. Rardon - Campbell River Mirror](#)

posted Mar 26, 2015 at 2:00 PM

When Tom Simpson called Campbell River aboriginal economic development consultant Tom Sewid, he was simply looking for some help promoting his budding business.

What he ended up with was an expanded product line.

Simpson is the owner of Cedar Journeys Caskets, which creates a range of burial caskets made from western red cedar. A member of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, one of the many Coast Salish tribes of B.C., Simpson began adorning custom caskets with Coast Salish artwork.

Earlier this year, Simpson approached Sewid, a consultant who operates a website devoted to promoting aboriginal tourism and related cultural businesses. As the two discussed ways to promote Cedar Journeys Caskets through an online presence, Sewid volunteered to paint one of the caskets in a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw orca design.

"As one can see, it added a whole different First Nations tribal art dimension to our caskets," said Simpson. "The different nations or regions of the Island and the coast have their own art forms, ceremonies and practices."

He has also found a willing partner for his venture in Sandy Poelvoorde, owner of Boyd's Funeral Services in Campbell River. An independent business, Poelvoorde has his "orca" casket on display in her shop — the only funeral home that currently does so.

"Sandy is willing to think outside the box," Simpson said. "She's unusual on the Island, because she sells out of her shop without marking my (caskets) up."

"She's willing to work with my affordability model to make these available to First Nations families on the North Island."

Simpson started on the path to the unique business nearly a decade ago, while making pre-funeral arrangements for his mother. In discussions with a local funeral director, he learned there were no suppliers of cedar caskets, which he wanted as a way to pay tribute to his mother's culture and life story.

"It's not strictly traditional; it's a contemporary version," said Simpson. "But I wanted to work with red cedar because of its historical importance to the peoples of the coast. There was no part of our lives that was not touched by cedar. We were swaddled in it when we came into this life, and we went out in it."

A year later, he suffered a stroke and, during the next year of recuperation, recalled that discussion and decided to try filling the need.

"I started this as something therapeutic," said Simpson. "I needed something to do while I was still in recovery, to keep my hands busy and give me focus."

A former logger, Simpson taught himself to create and assemble his own caskets. Initially, the caskets were plain red cedar, but eventually Simpson began incorporating traditional art into the designs, including silkscreened linen panels bearing the First Nations sun or hummingbird designs and handles carved in the shape of canoe paddles.

When Simpson began, his caskets were made for friends, family and other Coastal First Nations customers. Now, word has spread up and down the coast, and he is turning out 30-36 caskets each year simply through word of mouth.

The expanded interest in the caskets beyond the Coast Salish nations has led to more collaborative efforts with other artists.

To keep up with the increased demand, Simpson took on apprentice Justice Moreno, a Vancouver Island University student of Nuuchah-Nulth and Coast Salish descent. Sewid, whose ancestry is Kwakiutl on his father's side and Cree on his mother's, worked with both of them on the Kwakwaka'wakw casket.

"The got me involved doing the native painting and design outlines," said Sewid. "But there were three different First Nations working on it."

Simpson's workshop contains both pre-painted caskets and unpainted models that can be finished by the artist of the customer's choosing, with their own family crests or other personal images.

For more information on Cedar Journeys Caskets, call Simpson at 250-816-0464 or email simpsontg@gmail.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.campbellrivermirror.com/business/297707441.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

Another place to fuel up in Norway House Cree Nation

[Molly Gibson Kirby](#) / Thompson Citizen

March 19, 2015 07:51 AM

A new 2,000-square-foot QuickStop opened up in Norway House Cree Nation March 19. The new corner store and gas station will include a Tim Hortons counter that has beverages and baked goods, as well as a hot and convenience food section.

In a March 16 press release, Norway House Chief Ron Evans says this new store means a lot to the community. “We are delighted to have partnered with North West on this economic development initiative. The opening of the new Quickstop, has allowed us to further expand services and create new employment opportunities in the community.”

Thirty new jobs ranging from cashier to management positions will be created, with Norway House Cree Nation residents primarily filling these positions.

The North West Company operates Northern Stores and Giant Tiger locations in Western Canada.

Christine Reimer, North West’s sales and operations vice-president, says Evans and the Norway House Cree Nation council were great partners and helped play an important role in making the project a reality. “We are pleased to enhance the products and services we offer to the members of the Norway House Cree Nation and thank everyone involved for turning this vision into a reality.”

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony March 19, there were speeches, giveaways and free Tim Hortons beverages.

The new store will provide both gas and diesel for vehicles.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/another-place-to-fuel-up-in-norway-house-cree-nation-1.1797632#sthash.4NhxKevW.dpuf>

Alberta’s First Nation bands to receive government funding for emergency preparation



Flood damage in a home on the Siksika First Nation in the summer of 2013

CTV Calgary Staff

Published Friday, March 20, 2015 1:04PM MDT

An agreement between Alberta's First Nations and the federal and provincial levels of government will provide bands with funding to create emergency plans and doubles the number of field officers deployed during natural disasters and other emergencies.

The federal government has committed \$14.6M to Alberta's 45 First Nations bands during the 10 year agreement.

The announcement follows the aftermath of the 2013 flooding of the Bow River which devastated the Siksika Nation, east of Calgary. Many of the nation's members were displaced from their homes for months and several residents have yet to return.

The Chief of the Siksika Nation says the recovery effort continues.

"Are we there yet? No," explains Chief Vincent Yellowoldwoman. "People are not in their homes yet. Then we can say yes. That's one step."

Premier Jim Prentice says the lessons of the 2013 floods have not been lost.

"That was flood was an invaluable lesson to all of us," said Prentice. "Emergency management money properly spent makes a difference in saving lives."

Direct Link: <http://calgary.ctvnews.ca/alberta-s-first-nation-bands-to-receive-government-funding-for-emergency-preparation-1.2289919>

Federal money pledged for aboriginal connections program

By Collin Gallant on March 21, 2015.



MP LaVar Payne announces \$120,000 for the Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services. Jeanette Hansen, executive director at the Miywasin Centre, looks on.--NEWS PHOTO EMMA BENNETT

Medicine Hat News

A federal grant will help local aboriginal young people and elders connect with nature and each other, according to officials at the Miywasin Centre and MP LaVar Payne.

Ottawa's New Horizons Program for Seniors will provide \$25,000 to the group in Medicine Hat to promote mentorship as well as activity and well-being in the older age group.

Jeannette Hansen, the centre's executive director, said the money would help pair elders in the group with young people to plant and tend community gardens this spring and summer. In the fall, the produce will be canned with seniors passing on their knowledge and life skills to the youth.

The group is also excited about a program to provide "horse therapy" wherein seniors interact with horses to overcome feelings of isolation and anxiety or general inactivity.

"Many of our seniors grew up with horses and it would be nice to bring that back in a safe environment," said Hansen.

Also, the program will allow for the purchase of a new natural gas stove at the group's headquarters at 517 3rd St. S.E.

"This program is really geared towards seniors," said Payne, during the grant announcement Friday. "What we can give back to seniors in their later years is really important."

Direct Link: <http://medicinehatnews.com/news/local-news/2015/03/21/federal-money-pledged-for-aboriginal-connections-program/>

Tough times in Hopedale has mayor musing about resettlement

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 24, 2015 3:17 PM NT Last Updated: Mar 24, 2015 3:17 PM NT



A state of emergency has been declared in Hopedale, Labrador due to low water pressure. (Google Maps)

The AngajukKâk, or mayor, in the Labrador Inuit community of Hopedale says he may have no choice but to press for resettlement if the situation with the water supply and access to housing is not addressed.

Jimmie Tuttauk told CBC's *CrossTalk* Tuesday that these are frustrating times in the isolated coastal community, which, according to the 2011 Census, has a population of less than 600.

"We don't want to move, really. But if we can't get access to land or better water ... something has to be done here," said Tuttauk.

"The bottom line is if we can't get no satisfaction, a better water supply and access to more housing, then we have to take this route."

Less than a trickle in some homes

Hopedale is the legislative home for the Government of Nunatsiavut.

Earlier this week, the Hopedale Inuit Community Government declared a state of emergency because the reservoir that supplies the town with water is running dangerously low.

The water supply was established many years ago, when the community was much smaller.

Many homes at higher elevations have little to no running water, and there are wide-ranging restrictions on the use of the little water that is available.

In some cases, homeowners are unable to flush toilets, wash clothes or even bathe.

The local school has been closed, along with the Nunatsiavut Health and Social Development Building, said Tuttauk.

An expensive solution

The Red Cross delivered an emergency shipment of water on Tuesday morning, and the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies has also pledged a further 84 cases, added Tuttauk.

The water outflow is now above the waterline in the reservoir, and Tuttauk said that's an immediate concern that needs to be addressed.

In the longer term, he said the town needs to tap into a new, larger supply.

Tuttauk said he has applied to Labrador Inuit Lands to acquire access to Trout Pond, some two kilometres away.

But installing the necessary infrastructure won't be cheap. He estimates the costs of just building a road to the pond at more than \$8 million.

He said there's also a dire need to bring water and sewer to about half the community, at a further cost of more than \$8 million.

He's hoping the provincial government will agree to a cost-sharing arrangement, with the community government paying 10 per cent.

"I want to let people know that the Hopedale community government is working very hard and trying to get this problem solved with our water and sewer system and get extra land with a new water supply," he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/tough-times-in-hopedale-has-mayor-musing-about-resettlement-1.3007319>

Government grants money for ramp and railing at MMF building

[Ian Graham](#) / Thompson Citizen
March 24, 2015 11:46 AM



The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) hall in Thompson will become more accessible to people with disabilities after the MMF-Thompson Region received a \$19,000 grant from the federal government's Enabling Accessibility Fund March 17. Photograph By Ian Graham

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) hall in Thompson will become more accessible to people with disabilities after the MMF-Thompson Region received a \$19,000 grant from the federal government's Enabling Accessibility Fund March 17.

The money will be used to build a ramp and railing to provide access to the hall within the organization's building in Thompson.

The grant was announced by Saint Boniface MP Shelly Glover, minister of Canadian heritage and official languages, on behalf of Candice Bergen, minister of state for social development.

"With this investment, the Manitoba Metis Federation will be making their facility more accessible and more inclusive," said Glover. "It's an excellent example of the positive benefits of our Enabling Accessibility Fund."

Glover added that the government is accepting grant proposals to the fund until April 27.

"I encourage organizations to take this opportunity to submit their new proposals for projects, in particular those for children, such as playgrounds and recreational facilities. Our government remains committed to supporting Canadians and their families by eliminating barriers and helping all Canadians to fully participate in and contribute to their communities."

Julyda Lagimodiere, MMF-Thompson Region vice-president, said the ramp and railing will be located at the building's south entrance.

"The Robert Parenteau Memorial Hall located at 171 Cree Rd. in Thompson accommodates various events hosted by the MMF and other groups and we are happy that soon the facility will be accessible to all," said Lagimodiere.

Organizations can receive grants of up to \$50,000 from the Enabling Accessibility Fund, which gives priority to projects like playgrounds and recreational facilities that enhance access for children, veterans and seniors with disabilities. Some examples of typical projects include widening doorways and hallways, installation of elevators and automated doors, installing accessible bathrooms and service counters, installing assistive technology, installing or updating information technology, upgrading facilities that offer programs for adults and children with autism and cognitive/intellectual impairments, and improving lighting, acoustics or contrast.

Up to \$11 million is available from the Enabling Accessibility Fund this year and municipalities are eligible to submit proposals that improve access for children with disabilities because many recreational facilities are managed by municipal governments.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/thompson/government-grants-money-for-ramp-and-railing-at-mmf-building-1.1802745#sthash.9tYkgsye.dpuf>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Cuthand: Police changing perceptions of First Nations

By Doug Cuthand, The Starphoenix March 20, 2015



Doug Cuthand

The historic relationship between law enforcement and First Nations has been difficult at best and downright adversarial at worst.

The RCMP was used in the past by the Department of Indian Affairs to enforce the Indian Act. This meant the Mounties would accompany church officials as they picked up children to be taken to residential schools, or officers would arrest individuals who were away from their reserve without a permit.

The RCMP was cursed with the responsibility of enforcing laws that applied exclusively to First Nations people. When the Indian Act contained clauses that outlawed First Nations religious practices the RCMP would go to a reserve under orders from the Indian agent to tear down a sun dance lodge, or on the West Coast officers would arrest the participants at a potlatch.

It didn't have to be this way. When our chiefs signed the treaties they agreed to obey the law and live under the protection of the queen. The respect our people held for the queen spread south of the border, and it was this protection that Chief Sitting Bull sought. Later, it was a factor in the ill-fated flight of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce.

In any event, the RCMP has an unfortunate tradition of being seen as an outside force. The traditional role of the police being seen as the protectors was absent. The RCMP was in the position of enforcing some of the most destructive government policies, so its reputation suffered.

As a result, the RCMP and police services as a whole have a negative perception among First Nations communities. This attitude stays with our people when they move to the city. Our people are isolated and vulnerable to violence and crime in an urban setting.

Saskatoon police Sgt. Ernie Louttit told me that he thought of himself as the protector. He policed the area west of the downtown for 25 years. He got the nickname "Indian Ernie" at a time when he was the third aboriginal member in the history of the police service. Today there are more than 50 aboriginal members. Louttit told me that he was aware of what our people were facing, and after he had someone in custody he would treat them with empathy that might have been lacking in other officers.

The RCMP, too, has realized the importance of working with First Nations, and with training and employing more aboriginal officers. Policing has changed for both the RCMP and urban police forces over the past several decades.

Recruiting aboriginal people is a priority now, and they now constitute about 20 per cent of the RCMP in the province, including the present and past deputy commissioners of F Division (Saskatchewan). RCMP officers were often isolated from the community. When new officers joined a detachment, their orientation would consist of a ride around with a colleague who would point out all the trouble spots.

Later, a retired officer told me, his commanding officer would take the new member out to a reserve and leave him with the band council. They would introduce him around the reserve and meet the elders, people at the clinic, the school and other institutions. This gave the officers a different perspective on the community, and they took ownership and protected the people.

Saskatoon has also benefited from the changes in the police service. Aboriginal recruitment is up, and Police Chief Clive Weighill and his predecessors have reached out to the aboriginal community. There are 58 aboriginal members in a police force of 450,

or about 12 per cent. About 15 per cent of Saskatoon's population is aboriginal, so we are reaching parity.

Chief Weighill gave formal thanks and recognition this week to the 17 members of the elders' advisory committee. The group was established 20 years ago to assist the police, and according to Chief Weighill it has become an invaluable asset to the relationship between the police service and the city's aboriginal population.

"What I appreciate is that the elders are very frank and brutally honest. Now many of our elders don't get the accolades they deserve. They help people in court and in need. And they help the youth and are such an integral part of the community that we thought it was only appropriate that they be honoured."

The elders received plaques and badges as recognition of their good work. This is the first time in the history of the Saskatoon Police Service that civilians have received badges.

Among the recipients were elders Walter and Maris Linklater, Linda Young, who works at Confederation Park School, Joe Quewezance, former head of the Saskatoon Tribal Council, elders Edward Baldhead and Evelyn Linklater, and Florence Highway, who supported the police bike ride across Canada in support of diabetes. They walked from Ottawa to Newfoundland to show their commitment to the cause.

Police services all across Canada are experiencing change. Multiculturalism and First Nations migration are changing the face of cities, and police services must adapt to the new reality. Co-operation, respect and dialogue are the way of the future.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Cuthand+Police+changing+perceptions+First+Nations/10905350/story.html>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

A gutsy move on language standardization

"We hope Nunavut residents will keep their minds open to the use of Roman orthography"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 20, 2015 - 7:15 am

As the people of Nunavut contemplate the tarnished dream of April 1, 1999, it's worth noting that not all is lost.

Just last week, we saw that when elected leaders make decisive use of the powerful instruments that the Nunavut project put into their hands, they can move on from the dithering and magical thinking of the past.

That's what Education Minister Paul Quassa appeared to do this past March 12, when he announced that his department will look at the idea of adopting Roman orthography as the standard method for teaching the written form of the Inuit language within the territory's schools.

By Nunavut standards, that's a bold move.

But if the Inuit language is to even come close to achieving the status that Nunavut's two language laws and the Education Act set out in theory, the Government of Nunavut must make some tough, urgent decisions on standardization and modernization.

In the Nunavut school system, only one language is used consistently at all grade levels: English. And for nearly all Grade 12 graduates, it's proficiency in English, and only English, that matters to those who seek admission to colleges and universities.

And in the territorial government, there's only one language that matters: English and only English. Yes, the Nunavut Official Languages Act grants official status to the Inuit language, and the Inuit Language Protection Act contains a variety of measures aimed at ensuring its health.

But at the GN, as in all of Nunavut's Inuit organizations and quasi-government agencies, there's only one functional language of work: English. That is the language in which all the real work is done: legislation, policy creation, report writing and pretty much all forms of external and internal communication.

Territorial law may grant official status to the Inuit language. But in reality, it functions only as a symbolic language — a nostalgic reminder of identity, a dress-up language displayed for show. In government, where the written word is paramount, the real work is done in English.

The Laval university linguist Aurélie Hot confirmed this in [an article published in 2009](#), based on a study of Inuit language speakers in Iqaluit and Igloolik.

Her conclusion? “There seem to be a vicious circle that keeps the status of Inuktitut at the level of a symbolic language,” she said in a 2010 interview with *Nunatsiaq News*.

As a first step towards reversing that trend, the GN, together with the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit language authority, must move towards standardization of the written language. This means teaching it more or less the same way in every community, using a more or less standard writing system and terminology.

And it appears that Nunavut education officials now believe that first step may be easier to accomplish with Roman orthography than with syllabics.

Quassa and his staff must know, surely, that any movement towards the use of Roman orthography in eastern Nunavut will spark stiff resistance among those who have been attached to the use of syllabics for their entire lives. Numerous MLAs and cabinet ministers must also know that.

But a mature, informed government must sometimes make tough decisions that not everyone supports. A mature, informed government must sometimes make tough decisions that even a majority may not support.

As Quassa said last week, the process that lies before the Government of Nunavut on this issue is likely to be complex. They will start with an implementation plan for submission to cabinet at some point, but not before a lengthy period of consultation and research.

When governments promise “consultation” and “research” they often do so to create the wiggle room they might need if they end up choosing to back out later. So Quassa’s announcement comes with a built-in escape clause. There’s lots of opportunity for backtracking and delay.

But give credit where credit is due. Last week, a Nunavut cabinet made a tough decision on a tough issue. We hope Nunavut residents will keep their minds open to the use of Roman orthography. **JB**

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674a_gutsy_move_on_language_standardization/

First Nations institutions pleased

By Kerry Benjoe, The Leader-Post March 21, 2015

Despite the reduction in the provincial budget for First Nation and Metis people, educational institutions did receive some additional funding, which was appreciated.

According to the 2015-16 provincial budget, aboriginal people will receive \$2.9 million less than last year.

Jim Reiter, provincial minister responsible for First Nation and Metis Relations, says the \$2.9-million decrease represents only a small percentage in overall government spending in this sector.

He said the drop is a direct result of decreased casino revenue and the fact that last year's budget included one-time funding of \$1 million for the North American Indigenous Games.

Reiter said that in the middle of an austerity budget, the investment into aboriginal programs was "status quo."

This year, the government opted to target its funding, which included \$428,000 to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. This represents a 24-per-cent funding increase since 2007.

"Obviously, that will go a long way in helping our students succeed in postsecondary education and trades," said Bobby Cameron, second vice-chief for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

He admits he remained optimistic and hopeful in the days leading up to the budget.

Although he appreciates the investment made into SIIT, he wished other First Nations institutions would have fared better.

Cameron said FSIN will continue to push the issue of resource-revenue sharing and resource development on behalf of First Nations people in the province.

Riel Bellegarde, SIIT president, said he couldn't be happier for the increase in funding and the government's support.

"Considering the current physical environment, we can't be anything but pleased about the budget," he said.

SIIT offers post-secondary education programs in business, health and information technology as well as an ABE (Adult Basic Education).

The addition funding will be used to enhance its student success model, information technology and to grow and evolve its programming.

"We want to make sure we are attractive to today's learner and we are meeting the needs of industry in what they need in terms of skilled labour," he said.

Also welcome news for SIIT was the increase in ABE funding because it will help decrease the current waiting lists at its Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert campuses.

FNUUniv received the same two-per-cent increase as last year, which worked out to \$75,000.

FNUUniv President Mark Dockstator was pleasantly surprised by the increase.

"We always hope for the best, but plan for the worst," he said. "We were planning that we would hopefully get the same amount of funding as last year and hoping we would get an increase, but it certainly wasn't anything we were anticipating or that we thought would come through."

No decision has been made on where the money will be spent.

"We will run some numbers and see where it takes us," said Dockstator.

However, NDP Leader Cam Broten was not satisfied with what was in the budget for aboriginal people and insists it was not a status-quo budget because it contained some cuts.

"Even if it was status-quo - that wouldn't be acceptable," he said. "This is a disappointment when it comes to First Nation and Metis people."

He said believes the province is missing out in the long run by not investing more to close the education gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/technology/First+Nations+institutions+pleased/10908470/story.html>

UWinnipeg approves mandatory indigenous course requirement

Students will be required to take at least 1 indigenous studies course moving forward

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 26, 2015 5:24 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 26, 2015 6:02 PM CT



University of Winnipeg (Donna Lee/CBC)

Going forward, students at the University of Winnipeg will have to take at least one indigenous studies course in order to graduate.

The U of W senate approved, in principle, a motion on Thursday that will require all students take a course focused on indigenous rights, art, cultural traditions, history or governance.

“We are very proud of the vision and leadership demonstrated by our students,” Annette Trimbee, president and vice-chancellor of U of W, said in a release.

“We have taken an important step on the path to a better, more understanding, and inclusive society. The University of Winnipeg is proud to be a catalyst for positive change.”

Wab Kinew, associate vice-president of Indigenous Affairs at the U of W, echoed Trimbee.

“Today is a good day for The University of Winnipeg – as well as for the broader community: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada,” Kinew said in a release.

“The University of Winnipeg is a leader in indigenous inclusion and we are excited about the positive impact today’s development will have on the upcoming generation of leaders and citizens.”

The announcement comes just over a month after the U of W Students' Union and the U of W Aboriginal Students' Council [called on university administration to make taking indigenous studies courses mandatory](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/uwinnipeg-approves-mandatory-indigenous-studies-courses-mandatory).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/uwinnipeg-approves-mandatory-indigenous-course-requirement-1.3011314>

Aboriginal Health

Nunavut child dental health project gets \$6.9M expansion

Children from 25 communities will be flown out for dental surgery as part of the 3-year project

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 20, 2015 5:35 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 20, 2015 12:01 PM CT



A recent study says 85 per cent of Inuit children need dental work on an average of eight teeth. (CBC Calgary)

New money for dental surgery in Nunavut is a good investment, but not based on valuable feedback from those in the know, according to one dentist.

"I wish they would consult some of the dentists that actually live here because we live and breathe the problems on a daily basis," said Steve Partyka, a dentist in Iqaluit.

He said this in response to an announcement by Nunavut Health Minister Paul Okalik that a pilot project to provide out-of-territory dental surgery will be expanded.

In 2013, the federal government chartered five planes so that 120 children from Cape Dorset, Arctic Bay and Repulse Bay could undergo dental surgery in Churchill, Manitoba. Now that project will extend to children in Nunavut's 22 other communities at a cost of \$6.9 million over the next three years.

"The earlier that we catch them, they have healthier teeth and won't cost us more in the long run," said Okalik.

Dental surgery is a pressing and expensive need for many children in Nunavut. A recent survey shows that 85 per cent of Inuit children need dental work on an average of eight teeth.

Partyka knows that first-hand.

"A lot of us work six to seven days a week, 12- to 14-hour days, dealing with these problems directly," he said.

The territorial government estimates a cost of about \$1,000 per surgery, which doesn't include the cost of travel and accommodation.

Okalik says the money will also be used to hire more local dental professionals.

Partyka says with only two dentists living in the territory, and one soon to retire, he is pleased money will be used to recruit more oral health workers, who include dentists, dental hygienist and dental therapists. However, he is concerned that dental therapists are

typically sent to under-privileged and remote areas, and don't have a clearly defined mandate like dentists and hygienists.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-child-dental-health-project-gets-6-9m-expansion-1.3002462>

Solving Nunavut's food insecurity will need local input

People who want to help should listen to Northerners and get informed about the issues

By Gloria Song, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 21, 2015 6:00 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 21, 2015 6:00 AM CT



A price tag lists the price of a jug of orange juice at a grocery store in Iqaluit in December 2014. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Because I live in the North, I've been getting questions from my friends in southern Canada about what they can do to help improve the food insecurity problem in Nunavut.

It's been heart-warming to follow the response to news coverage of the problem, especially initiatives like the Helping Our Northern Neighbours Facebook group, which ships care packages North. But the folks involved with the group themselves recognize that this is only a temporary solution.

What else can the rest of Canada do? There is no simple answer, and I often struggle to come up with one for my friends who ask. However, there are a few things that would be a start in the right direction.

The best thing we can do is to listen to Northerners themselves. They understand their problems, and they also have ideas on how to deal with it.

I spent the afternoon having tea with a well-known Inuit elder in our community.

"Some change is good and some change is bad," she told me.

"In the old days, we would live out on the land and just lived on basic needs, eating caribou, fish, and seal. Now that we live in communities built by the government, we have to pay for rent and power, which we never did on the land. Now people need money, and now we have a different diet, not a very healthy one. Now there's alcohol and drugs.

"It's a different way of life than our ancestors lived, and living up north is so expensive now."

She talks about how families here live from pay cheque to pay cheque, even the more fortunate families with two incomes. The happiest days are paydays, when everyone knows they are going to eat that day.

I ask her what she thinks needs to be done. She thinks that in some ways, we need to go back to the traditional ways. She recalls how happy people are when they can go out on the land to go fishing and hunting. As a practical solution, she agrees that we need to increase support for hunters.

"We need to get more funding to the hunters and trappers organizations so they can get more food out on the land," she suggests.

"Give hunters a full time job hunting. All these unemployed people in town can go out on the land hunting, getting healing and refreshed."

Then they could come back to town with food to share with the community, and they would feel good about themselves.

Get informed

What can our southern neighbours do to help improve the food insecurity problem in Nunavut?

The first step is to become properly informed. Look at the roots of poverty in Nunavut. There are complex, often interrelated social issues, including housing shortages, a lack of support resources, isolation, and colonialism.

Understanding the issues means understanding the cultural history of Nunavut as well. Learn about how the Inuit lived for centuries, and how these living patterns shifted with contact with European explorers and later as the Canadian government increased its presence in the north.



A child holds a sign at a protest against high food prices in Nunavut in June 2012. (Genevieve Nutarariaq/Facebook)

Learn about the High Arctic relocation of families from Inukjuak in Northern Quebec to Grise Fiord and Resolute as part of our government's strategy to assert Arctic sovereignty. Learn about the nearly irreparable cultural disruption that resulted from sending Inuit children to residential schools.

Learn about what Nunavummiut face now. There are no Wal-Marts or Loblaws here, so sending big box gift cards is not helpful. Permafrost means that the ground is frozen nearly year round, so one cannot seriously suggest that the Inuit take up outdoor farming. And no, we can't propose to move everyone in Nunavut down south.

Co-ordinate with Northern groups

We need better strategic co-ordination with local organizations. Many Northern communities already have food banks, wellness centres, homeless shelters, or social workers who know the specific needs in the community. What is lacking is an efficient means of connecting these community players with the resources of southern Canadians who want to help.

Helping Our Northern Neighbours is one strategy at addressing this, but there is so much more that can be done as well. For example, local organizations in the North know how to negotiate with the local stores for deals, or get shipping discounts with Northern airlines. Co-ordinating with these local community organizations would be an effective way of dealing with the challenge of the high shipping costs that confront donors who want to send help.

We also need to ask questions and demand honest answers. Is the Nutrition North food subsidy program working well, and if not, how can we improve it? How can we demand

more accountability and transparency of the organizations responsible for the well-being of Nunavummiut?

A long-term solution, however, requires meaningful political change. We have to let our politicians know that the well-being of Nunavummiut is an issue that we deeply care about, especially when we vote.

The current government has already clearly expressed its interest in development in the North; Prime Minister Stephen Harper has toured Nunavut annually for the last nine years, and in our community of Cambridge Bay, they are building a huge Canadian High Arctic Research Station.

We need to let our politicians at all levels know that we also want to see poverty in Nunavut addressed as a higher priority, in order to put pressure on the government to find ways to improve the situation.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/solving-nunavut-s-food-insecurity-will-need-local-input-1.3003949>

Aboriginal health research institute to bear doctor's ceremonial name

GLORIA GALLOWAY

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Saturday, Mar. 21 2015, 12:00 AM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Mar. 21 2015, 10:10 AM EDT

A research institute dedicated to improving the health of aboriginal Canadians will bear the ceremonial name of the Toronto neurosurgeon who founded it and of a doctor who warned more than 100 years ago that tuberculosis was killing children in Indian residential schools.

Michael Dan, who was heir to his father's generic-drug fortune, donated \$10-million [last June](#) to the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto to create the first privately-funded institute in the world focused on improving health in indigenous communities.

On Monday, it will be named the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health.

“The naming process was difficult, because it wasn't just about ego, it was about consultation with indigenous thought leaders. And the feedback we got was we really

need a de-colonized name for this institute if it's going to get the full support of the aboriginal community," Dr. Dan said. "So I said, I've got an Anishinaabe name and I am very proud of it, so why don't we just use that?"

Waakebiness, which means Radiant Thunderbird in the Anishinaabemowin language, is the name given to Dr. Dan three years ago by a medicine man in the Lac La Croix First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. The philanthropist was trying to develop a hydro project in the region, and the First Nations elders gave him an eagle feather and an Anishinaabe name to give him strength.

Bryce is a tribute to Peter Henderson Bryce, the chief medical officer with the departments of the interior and Indian affairs from 1904 to 1907, who sounded the alarm about the large number of aboriginal children in the church-run residential schools who were dying of disease, especially tuberculosis.

Duncan Campbell Scott, the architect of the Indian residential school system, cut the funding for Dr. Bryce's research in 1913, saying the costs far exceeded the benefits.

But in 1922, Dr. Bryce published a pamphlet titled *The Story of a National Crime: Being a Record of the Health Conditions of the Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921*, which prompted the government to establish guidelines for management of the schools.

Dr. Dan said Dr. Bryce is being honoured for his "brave, courageous work" and for standing up to Mr. Scott.

The two doctors have a connection beyond an interest in indigenous health. When the Canadian West was being settled, Dr. Bryce said farmers and labourers from Eastern Europe and Scandinavia would make better immigrants than urban people from Great Britain who spoke English but could not work the land.

"So he had an influence on Canadian immigration policy," said Dr. Dan "and that's how my great grandfather came to Canada."

The institute operates with the input of indigenous people and brings together scholars in public health, medicine, nursing, social work, education, law, anthropology and other disciplines to tackle the problems of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health.

The life expectancy of First Nations people is five to seven years shorter than that of the general population. Among the Inuit, it is 15 years shorter. Indigenous newborns have a mortality rate that is 1.5 times that of babies in the rest of Canada, and they have more birth defects.

Jeff Reading, the institute's interim director, said the gap in life expectancy and quality of life between aboriginal Canadians and the rest of Canada has to be changed. As for the institute's name, Dr. Reading said, "I think it's brilliant how it evolved into this kind of

melding of the indigenous name with the sort of pioneer in public health because it brings together that collaboration that we are seeking.”

Editor's note: A previous version of this article described the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health as the first research institute in the world focused on improving health in indigenous communities. This has been corrected.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/aboriginal-health-research-institute-to-bear-doctors-ceremonial-name/article23572566/>

Ear infections too common in Inuit children: pediatrician

More than 80 doctors and health officials gather in Iqaluit for Challenges in Infectious Diseases conference

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 23, 2015 6:31 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 23, 2015 6:46 AM CT



Dr. Johanne Morel says one fifth of Inuit children suffer from otitis media, an ear infection that causes hearing loss. (CBC)

A doctor who treats Inuit children in Nunavik says ear infections were rare before Inuit were settled into communities and she's calling for the creation of a circumpolar group to examine the issue.

Dr. Johanne Morel, a pediatrician based at the Montreal Children's Hospital, has been treating children in James Bay and Nunavik for 35 years.

She spoke at an infectious disease conference in Iqaluit this weekend about a middle ear infection called otitis media that causes hearing loss in 20 per cent of Inuit children in Nunavik.

Otitis media is rare and easily treatable in the south, but Morel says Inuit children get it earlier and more frequently.

She says doctors who travelled through the Eastern Arctic in the 1970s documented elders who had normal ear drums with no tears or perforations.

"The elders said their own children didn't have draining ears when they were small, but children in 1970 had a lot of perforated ear drums. So something happened then and we don't know what it is," she says.

Morel says some factors could be a change in diet and using a bottle instead of breastfeeding.

"In spite of improved access to medical care, in spite of campaigns to decrease smoking, in spite of campaigns to improve housing, in spite of a lot of antibiotic treatment ... it's just not changing," she says.

Morel says Inuit children in Greenland and Alaska are also affected by otitis media.

Conference brings together doctors from Inuit regions

More than 80 doctors and other health officials from Nunavut, Nunavik and beyond are in Iqaluit for the Challenges in Infectious Diseases conference.

Organizers hope to develop closer ties between the two regions.

Dr. Gabriel Fortin, president of the organizing committee, says resources are limited so collaboration is essential.

Workshops and discussions focused on illnesses such as tuberculosis, sexual transmitted infections and respiratory infections.

The conference wraps up on Monday.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ear-infections-too-common-in-inuit-children-pediatrician-1.3005027>

Indigenous health institute hopes to shrink First Nations gap in life expectancy

Even the name of the new Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health at U of T reflects a collaborative approach to improving the wellbeing of Canada's aboriginal people.



Epidemiologist and interim director Jeff Reading, left, with Dr. Michael Dan, whose gift of \$10 million allowed the creation of the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health at the University of Toronto.

By: [Marco Chown Oved](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Mon Mar 23 2015

The University of Toronto unveiled the name of its new aboriginal health institute on Monday, bringing the vision of a world-class research facility dedicated to indigenous issues one step closer to reality.

The Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health, which will be housed in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, was made possible by [a \\$10 million donation from Toronto neurosurgeon and philanthropist Dr. Michael Dan last June](#).

The institute's dual name alludes to the collaboration between native and non-native people that will be needed to combat the complex health problems faced by aboriginal people across Canada.

Waakebiness, or "radiant thunderbird from the south," is the ceremonial name given to Dan at the Lac La Croix First Nation, a Northern Ontario community where he has been collaborating on a [hydroelectric project](#).

Bryce refers to Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, founder of the Public Health Service of Ontario, who served as chief medical officer with the Departments of the Interior and Indian Affairs from 1904 to 1907. Bryce is remembered for having alerted the government to the high mortality rates in the residential school system from treatable diseases like tuberculosis.

The Star asked new interim director Jeff Reading, an epidemiologist and the first scientific director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health, to explain it. Reading is a member of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Nation in Prince Edward County.

What was the impetus behind an indigenous-specific health centre at U of T?

At the CIHR, we created a network of research centres that were all engaged in improving aboriginal health, but they have since been dissolved. This is a new initiative that came out of the desire of Michael Dan to do something to improve the gap in life expectancy and well-being between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada.

Will this be a hub bringing all the research centres together?

Yes. I think hub is a good way to frame it, because a hub has spokes and spokes go out to various communities and interests and expertise levels. If you believe, as I do, that the health care system needs to be guided by evidence, since not everybody has the all the capacity or expertise in all the areas of health care, this really drives us to develop partnerships and alliances.

Often research centres involve the director working with a small group of collaborators to drill down deep in a highly-specialized topic area. Aboriginal health isn't really like that. It's about going into a wide diversity of topic areas, anything from diabetes to infant health to HIV, and to be able to work with communities, but also with the researchers who have expertise in those fields.

What is the scope of the centre's research?

It's going to be relevant to community needs going from local to regional to national and international perspectives. There are striking similarities in the situation of indigenous people in Canada and in other countries. A lot of it is affected by factors like income, inequality, education, community infrastructure, housing and water quality. Actually, it relates more back to colonization and the economic situation indigenous people find themselves in relation to the nation state.

To what extent will the centre be academic or hands-on? Will you be producing experts to go out to aboriginal communities?

There are two guiding principles: scientific excellence and community relevance. In the past, often researchers would exploit aboriginal communities. The communities would never see the researcher and then find out later that they were published in some obscure health journal. Things have changed. We've developed ethical guidelines that make it necessary to have a partnership between the communities being researched and the academy, like the University of Toronto.

A third point is that we're not going to be afraid to address difficult questions and challenge the status quo in areas that are sensitive and a bit uncomfortable, like racism in the health care system, vulnerable child health and violence against women.

How will you work with existing aboriginal and public health organizations?

We're developing a community advisory council. We already have two co-chairs. One is Dr. Malcolm King, scientific director of the CIHR's Institute of Aboriginal Peoples'

Health. He's a member of the Mississaugas of the Credit River, on whose traditional territory U of T campus is located.

His co-chair is Margo Greenwood, who is the scientific lead of the Public Health Agency of Canada's collaborating centre on aboriginal health. She's Cree from northern Alberta. We will work together to determine the aboriginal representatives who will be on that council.

That is going to be a real important governance model, because we're going to take our priorities from the council. The truth is that we can't focus on everything. We have to determine the first issues we work on and how we go from there.

\$10 million seems like a lot of money on first blush, but how long will it last?

Eighty per cent will be invested in an endowment and available to the institute in perpetuity. The remaining 20 per cent will be spent to get the institute up and running over the first critical five years.

There is a lot of potential for growth. We're looking at trying to raise funds, but we also are going to be hiring staff who will be required to have their own research programs that will contribute to the institute in terms of operating grants and awards.

Correction – March 24, 2015: This article was edited from a previous version that misstated the day on which the name of the new aboriginal health institute was revealed.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

Direct Link: http://www.thestar.com/life/health_wellness/2015/03/23/indigenous-health-institute-hopes-to-shrink-first-nations-gap-in-life-expectancy.html

Toronto man waits for Aboriginal bone-marrow donor

Father-to-be Michael Daykin waits for his perfect match — a donor with Aboriginal background in a tiny pool of possibilities.



Lisa Maire, left, poses with her husband Michael Daykin, who is searching for a bone marrow donor to help him beat cancer.

By: [Diana Hall](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Sun Mar 22 2015

Shortly after ringing in the New Year, Michael Daykin wound up in hospital.

It wasn't because he had had too much to drink. It wasn't because he sprained his ankle while dancing a little too enthusiastically with his wife in the living room.

Daykin, 37, wound up in hospital on Jan. 7 to fight cancer in the bone marrow — acute myelogenous leukemia — that starts in blood stem cells. At Toronto's Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, before going into remission, he was sentenced to endure a month-long, in-patient chemotherapy treatment and then several months of outpatient treatment.

But there's no telling how long Daykin, who is half-Aboriginal and half-European, will have to wait find a bone-marrow donor to keep relapses at bay. It's a search made much more complicated due to his lineage.

“For me, I know that something like less than 1 per cent of the registry itself of bone marrow donors consists of Aboriginal heritage, so there's not many options, there's not many available donors who have registered from the Aboriginal community to donate bone marrow, which makes the pool very small,” Daykin says.

In 2011, the OneMatch network, which is used to match donors with a patient in need, reported Aboriginal people made up “only 0.9 per cent” of its network, which was made up of more than 300,000 possible donors.

National Household Survey results from the same year stated those reporting an Aboriginal identity made up 4.3 per cent of the total Canadian population, amounting to more than 1.4 million people.

Four years later, the ethnic gap in the OneMatch network hasn't disappeared. In big, bright red letters on its website, Canadian Blood Services has issued a plea for possible Aboriginal donors and other ethnic males between 17 and 35 years old to register.

Attracting more potential donors from ethnic minorities, and specifically with Aboriginal background like Daykin, is part of the reason he wanted to bring attention to his plight.

"It's painless, and it could save people's lives," Daykin says of the OneMatch registration process.

As Daykin waits for a donor, friends have set up a crowdfunding campaign to help the family cover treatment expenses as Daykin and his wife Lisa Maire prepare for their baby boy's arrival at the end of April.

"There can only be benefits coming out of raising awareness about the need for people to register to give bone marrow," he says.

"This isn't just for me."

It could save his life. It could shape his unborn son's.

With files from Ethan Lou

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/03/22/toronto-man-waits-for-aboriginal-bone-marrow-donor.html>

Worker says making cancer-related terms understood in Inuit a challenge

By: Peter Rakobowchuk, The Canadian Press

Posted: 03/24/2015 8:17 AM | [Comments: 0](#) | Last Modified: 03/24/2015 4:13 PM

MONTREAL - For Annie Buchan, educating Canada's Inuit about the dangers caused by cancer has been challenging.

The Inuit have a much higher cancer death rate than the general population and one of the highest incidence rates of lung cancer in the world.

Buchan, a recently retired health-care worker who lives in Nunavut, says when people talk about cancer in the Inuit society, it's like a death sentence.

She said the real challenge has been to make sure that cancer-related terms are understood by the general population.

"It's very technical a lot of the time and it causes lot of misunderstanding between the professionals and the patients," Buchan, who lives in Cambridge Bay, said in an interview.

Buchan is vice-president of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, a partner in the project, and says tobacco, drugs and alcohol are used excessively in Inuit communities.

She said that could be reduced if Inuit took better care of their health.

"Education is the key that I feel is needed," she said "We need to educate our population of Inuit to better understand the terms, treatment and symptoms of cancer."

That improved in 2013 thanks to Pauktuutit, which launched a glossary containing 250 cancer-related terms translated into five dialects of Inuktitut with the help of the Canadian Cancer Society and other partners.

The glossary is written in what Buchan calls plain language and can be used by the general public and health-care providers.

The Canadian Cancer Society is hoping a new corporate donation of more than \$1 million will help increase the awareness of the disease among Inuit across the country.

It announced Tuesday that Jaguar Land Rover Canada has contributed \$1.4 million over five years to help improve cancer literacy and education among Inuit.

An official with the Canadian Cancer Society noted that the smoking rate among the Inuit is three times higher than the general population.

Spokeswoman Tracy Torchetti said lung cancer is the most common type of cancer among all Inuit populations.

"Other cancers rising as a result partly of smoking are cervical and colorectal cancer," she said in an interview.

Torchetti described it as a complex problem.

"High tobacco use has been a major risk factor as well as things like diet and alcohol use," she said.

"It's all compounded by things like low income, inadequate housing, food insecurity and also lack of access to health-care services partly due to long distances."

Torchetti said people hear the word 'cancer' and think it's time to go home to die.

"These are the perceptions that we need to change if we want people to have better responses to treatment," she said.

According to Statistics Canada figures from 2011, the Inuit population in Canada numbered 59,445, with half under the age of 23.

It also said the average Inuit life expectancy is about 13 years shorter than that of other Canadians.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/health/worker-says-interpreting-cancer-related-terms-so-they-are-understood-by-inuit-a-challenge--297375581.html>

Tuberculosis rates remain sky-high among Canadian Inuit

Incidence rate of active TB among Inuit almost 400 times higher than among non-Aboriginals

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 24, 2015 - 7:10 am



Dr. Gonzalo Alvarez, the Ottawa researcher behind the Taima TB campaign, and Franco Buscemi of Nunasi Corp., call out the names of door prize winners after a community feast in 2012 where Alvarez presented the project's results. Alvarez plans to present more results of ongoing TB-fighting project and the Qikiqtani General Hospital's TB-tester at 7:00 p.m. at the Nunavut Research Institute in Iqaluit. (FILE PHOTO)

If you live in the Inuit regions of Canada, chances are that you or someone you know has tested positive for tuberculosis, a deadly infectious disease that usually affects the lungs.

In 2006 and again in 2014, Canada's minister of health announced the adoption of a national TB reduction target of 3.6 cases per 100,000 by 2015.

But TB rates among Inuit continue to be high — overall, at least 30 times higher than that target rate, or, in Nunavut, 49 times higher.

A [2014 Health Canada document](#) states that compared to the Canadian-born non-Aboriginal population, the incidence rate of active TB disease for Inuit is almost 400 times higher — although those rates don't tell all the whole story because the actual numbers of Inuit TB sufferers remain relatively small.

Still, TB, because it's so contagious and lethal, remains a huge problem, on which Nunavut plans to spend \$1.5 million in 2014-15, [Health Minister Paul Okalik](#) said during the recent legislative session.

The health department plans to introduce a TB awareness campaign, hire a TB educator to visit communities, hire indeterminate nurses in Clyde River, Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Pond Inlet, hire a term nurse in Pond Inlet “to address the several new active cases,” hire a term mobile nurse in the Kivalliq region, hire a laboratory technician and supplies to expand the use of the [GeneXpert tester](#) in Iqaluit, and hire a term epidemiology program officer to track TB diagnoses.

TB cases have increased in Nunavut, Okalik said — with 83 confirmed active TB cases in 2014, and one to date in 2015.

“We are doing what we can to turn the tide. We need to stop it and we are doing our best right now to identify and track where the cases are and we have workers that track where they have been,” Okalik said.

The GN is urging everyone to get tested for TB — and especially anyone with the symptoms of TB, which include a major cough that lasts for more than three weeks, fatigue, loss of appetite, night sweats and weight loss.

Most people infected with TB don't become ill or even know they are infected, because the TB bacteria can lie dormant in a person's lungs for many years.

Lowering the high TB rates among Inuit will take a long-term commitment and money, ITK's [2013 TB strategy said](#).

That strategy talked about how overcrowded and poorly-ventilated housing, limited access to nutritious food, and variable access to health care services contribute to the development of TB.

Expansion of programs, such as in-community x-ray clinics — like the community-wide x-ray testing offered in Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavut during a 2012 outbreak — the recent Taima TB project in Iqaluit, and new tools for TB detection, treatment, and prevention, all play a part in lowering the level of TB among Inuit, ITK said.

And, with more than 70 per cent of Inuit in Nunavut and Nunavik still smoking, the strategy also recommended making sure more Inuit are aware of the links between smoking and TB.

Overall, the strategy called for more community education, “Inuit-appropriate prevention control and care programs,” more research and good evaluation and reporting of TB cases.

The Taima TB project, which operated in Iqaluit from 2011 to 2013, found [the best ways to tackle Nunavut’s TB rate](#) is to visit people at home, hire Inuit to communicate with Inuit and get the community working together on the common goal of fighting TB.

Taima TB’s lessons appear to have inspired the new GN TB-plan, said Dr. Gonzalo Alvarez, a respirologist at the Ottawa Hospital.

Alvarez, who spearheaded the Taima TB project, recently wrote that “more can be done to bring down the Canadian incidence” of TB in [in a public health publication](#), called “TB in Canada — The battle is not over.”

You can find out more about the ongoing activities Taima TB March 24 in Iqaluit, when Alvarez will present results of Taima TB’s three-year research project on Iqaluit’s GeneXpert TB-tester at the Nunavut Research Institute at 7:00 p.m.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674tuberculosis_rates_remain_sky-high_among_Canadian_Inuit/

New SFU prof will research causes and prevention of chronic disease ‘epidemic’ among B.C. First Nations

First Nation Health Authority, St. Paul’s Hospital and university team up to fund a research chair in First Nation heart health and wellness

By Pamela Fayerman, Vancouver Sun March 25, 2015

Grand Chief Edward John says it was his 1998 heart attack that sowed the seeds of a new program at St. Paul’s Hospital that will focus on the cardiac health of B.C. First Nations residents.

“I was in Haida Gwaii and I had an unfortunate incident, so had to be medevaced to St. Paul’s,” John recalled Tuesday as the \$1.9 million First Nations Health Authority chair in heart health and wellness was announced.

Dr. Andy Ignaszewski, head of cardiology at St. Paul's, treated John. John was involved in treaty talks at the time and would later become an NDP cabinet minister for Children and Families.

John said he doesn't know where he'd be without his cardiologist's care over the past 17 years.

He credits his personal medical experiences, the disparities in health outcomes between aboriginals and non-aboriginals and his relationship with his physician for convincing him that such a research program is necessary. The new position and program is a partnership among Simon Fraser University, St. Paul's and the B.C. First Nations Health Authority.

A hiring search is underway to fill the new position, which John and others said is the first of its kind in Western Canada.

John said there is an "epidemic" of cardiovascular problems and other chronic diseases among B.C.'s First Nations. The new chair will do research on the treatment and prevention of those conditions and develop educational materials. He or she may also conduct studies on the use of plants and other traditional healing methods that might be useful, he said.

Dr. Evan Adams, the chief medical officer of the First Nations Health Authority, said federal and provincial reports show that heart disease and strokes are 1.5 times frequent among B.C.'s aboriginal population than among the non-aboriginal. Diabetes, a risk factor for heart disease, is three to five times more common. And First Nations people also have far higher rates of smoking and obesity. Adams said lifestyle (diet, smoking and lack of exercise), genetics, poor access to health care, and income all contribute to cardiovascular disease.

There are about 200,000 aboriginal people in B.C., 75 per cent of whom live off reserves.

Adam said there are aboriginal cultural or spiritual practices that may help ward off cardiovascular and chronic diseases, so research into these strategies will be a responsibility of the new chair.

Dr. John O'Neill, dean of health sciences at SFU, said that over 10 years, The First Nations Health Authority will pay \$600,000, St. Paul's — through its foundation — will give \$800,000 and the remaining \$500,000 will come from SFU which will also contribute support and other benefits as the holder of the chair will become a faculty member.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/prof+will+research+causes+prevention+chronic+disease+epidemic+among+First+Nations/10916492/story.html>

Aboriginal Affairs won't fund life-saving airstrip in Saskatchewan

Southend residents lack air ambulance service, while ground ambulance takes 5-hour round trip

By Bonnie Allen, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 25, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 25, 2015 5:30 AM CT



Sylvia Bird, 62, was forced to wait eight hours for a taxi ride to hospital after she was burned in a house fire in 1973. (Chanss Lagaden/CBC)

A Cree community in northern Saskatchewan without access to air ambulance service says people's lives have been lost or endangered while the federal and provincial governments squabble over jurisdiction.

Six hundred kilometres northeast of Saskatoon, on the southern shore of Reindeer Lake, the community of Southend is home to 1,000 people.

It doesn't have an airstrip that can accommodate an air ambulance, and the nearest hospital and doctor are located in La Ronge, a two- to three-hour drive on a winding gravel road.

5-hour ambulance wait

Southend doesn't have a licensed ambulance or any trained paramedics stationed on reserve, so patients must wait at least five hours while an ambulance makes the round trip from La Ronge.

Community members assemble at the local health clinic to share stories of loved ones who died waiting for the ambulance or en route to hospital.

"We've lost lives on the highway because they couldn't land the plane here," Kevin Morin, a local councillor with the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, told CBC News.



The school in Southend holds an impromptu rally after learning a CBC crew was visiting the community. (Bonnie Allen/CBC)

Sylvia Bird, 62, clutches a tissue as she tells of her own near-death experience. Bird was eight months pregnant in 1973 when she was engulfed in flames in a house fire. She had to wait eight hours for a taxi from La Ronge to be taken out of the community. She spent seven months in hospital receiving treatment for her burns.

Now, 42 years later, her face covered in scars, she wipes tears and shakes her head that little has changed.

"We need an airstrip. I don't want anything to happen to anyone else," Bird said.

Jurisdictional issues

The director of Northern Medical Services, Dr. Veronica McKinney, told CBC News that timely access to advanced medical care would save lives. She believes the airport issue is being tossed back and forth between the federal and provincial governments.

"They're falling between the cracks with jurisdictional issues," she said. McKinney is in charge of dispatching doctors to clinics in northern Saskatchewan, and she considers Southend to be the most difficult and dangerous to reach.

"Rather than one or the other group saying, 'OK, we'll go ahead and try to fix this, or make it better,' it seems to be, 'That's really not our area, or that's really not our jurisdiction,'" McKinney said.

In an email, Aboriginal Affairs told CBC News that capital projects it funds must be located on reserve. The Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation submitted a request for \$6 million to Aboriginal Affairs to build an airstrip, but it was rejected.

Southend is located on an island of hills and rock. so the only land suitable to build a 1,000-metre runway, the necessary length for air ambulance aircraft, is off the reserve.

But Aboriginal Affairs told the First Nation in a letter that the project would be rejected even if it was on reserve.

"Even if the location was on reserve, it is highly unlikely that available funds would allow for this project to be funded based on national priorities that place water and waste water as well as school projects as a top priority," wrote Aboriginal Affairs manager Brett Currie.

Southend airport rally0:50

As for Transport Canada, it gives money to upgrade existing airports with scheduled passenger service, not construct new ones.

It's a similar response from the province of Saskatchewan, which maintains 17 northern airports. It hasn't built a new airport in decades, and has no plans to contribute money to constructing one in Southend.

"There are other needs within the North and we have to prioritize," Doug Wakabayashi, spokesman from the Ministry of Highways and Transportation, told CBC News.

Wakabayashi said it's up to the community to explore other options for medical transportation or reach a compromise with the federal government.

Physicians and patients in danger

On snow-covered Reindeer Lake, councillors Kevin Morin and Simon Jobb point to a makeshift runway that's been used for some medical evacuations in the winter via commercial aircraft (not a fully equipped air ambulance).



In Southend, Simon Jobb and Kevin Morin are local councillors for Peter Ballantyne First Nation. (Chanss Lagaden/CBC)

Critically ill patients must pray that their emergency happens during daylight hours in clear weather so that a commercial pilot would even attempt to land on the ice. In the past, snowmobilers have had to tow planes out of snowdrifts before takeoff.

"This is our runway, but only for a few more weeks," Jobb added. As the temperatures warm, the landing strip will begin to thaw and the community will be cut off from air service until float planes can hit the open water.

The community was previously allowed to use a small private airstrip owned by a fishing lodge, until it was shut down in November. However, that airstrip didn't have lights or a runway long enough to land an air ambulance.

Dangerous night-time take off0:30

"The dangers that were there in landing and taking off were unbelievable," McKinney said. She admits that, in the past, physicians and pilots risked their lives under pressure to take off in the dark. In those cases, community members would park their vehicles and shine headlights to guide the plane.

Now that the private airstrip has closed, that risk has been eliminated, but the community is more isolated than ever.

Business case vs. public safety

"We're not looking for a handout," Jobb said. "We're willing to pitch in."

Recently, provincial and federal officials from several ministries and departments formed a working advisory committee to discuss Southend's airport problem. So far, its advice to the First Nation is to make a "business case" for how the airport would foster economic

development in order to seek federal dollars through the \$53 billion New Building Canada Plan. It mostly funds projects that bolster economic growth and job creation

"It has nothing to do with economics, it's about safety," Morin said. "It should be about life or death. It's about safety for our community, our children."

He points to forest fires as another serious threat to the community, and a natural disaster that often requires evacuation by air.

The councillors say it's an insult to their residents that a business case would be considered more seriously than their health and safety.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/aboriginal-affairs-won-t-fund-life-saving-airstrip-in-saskatchewan-1.3007326>

Rickets on the rise for aboriginal children in the North

Doctor says public health's efforts to stop resurgence 'abysmal failure'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 26, 2015 9:41 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 26, 2015 1:37 PM CT



An Ottawa physician is recommending vitamin D supplements for aboriginal children in the North after finding that rates of rickets among the population is 6 to 12 times higher than the Canadian average. (Shutterstock)

Rates of rickets continue to rise among aboriginal children in the North, a trend that has researchers increasingly concerned.

Dr. Leanne Ward, who works with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, did a 2007 study examining rates of rickets in aboriginal children in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut and Alaska between the ages of one and two.

The study found incidences of rickets that were six to 12 times higher than the rest of Canada, a trend that Ward says hasn't changed.

"We are all very concerned that we are seeing rickets in 2015," says Ward. "This is a global health problem we shouldn't be seeing anymore."

She says public health's efforts to stop the resurgence is an "abysmal failure."

Rickets is caused by a lack of vitamin D. It is categorized as a "rare disease" in developed countries, meaning that it affects less than one in 200,000 people on average. It can lead to bone, muscle and teeth development issues and an increased possibility of fractures.

"Infants can present in the first year of life, with seizures," says Ward. "They'll often show up in the emergency room. Older children will present with fractures, significant deformity of the lower limbs, so they have a waddling gait."

Ward says rickets isn't just caused by a lack of sunlight. She blames poor diets, and the lack of access to rich in vitamin D "country foods" such as char and caribou for the increased instances of the disease in the Northern aboriginal population.

Ward is recommending that territorial health departments develop a policy to prescribe vitamin D supplements to infants.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/rickets-on-the-rise-for-aboriginal-children-in-the-north-1.3010306>

Doctor in controversial aboriginal cancer case wins award



Dr. Karen Hill, centre, speaks about traditional native healing.

Hamilton Spectator

By [Joanna Frketich](#) Mar 26, 2015

A Six Nations doctor is getting an award for bringing aboriginal and western medicine closer together despite playing a key role in a divisive court decision.

Dr. Karen Hill's testimony was pivotal in a controversial November ruling giving aboriginal parents the right to abandon chemotherapy for their children in favour of traditional healing.

Now, she's receiving an award from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada "for her dedication to bridging the gap between indigenous health values and the practice of western medicine."

"The nomination process took place well before that case happened and certainly before it became public, as did the selection process," said Dr. Andrew Padmos, CEO of the college which sets standards for specialty care in Canada. "I think the timing was an issue."

The nominations for the inaugural Indigenous Health Award given for "zeal and devotion to the rights and pursuit of justice for Canada's Indigenous Peoples" closed Sept. 2.

Padmos can't say exactly when Hill was selected by an arm's-length committee for the award, which was announced Wednesday.

The case between McMaster Children's Hospital and Brant Family and Children's Services was heard between Sept. 17 and Nov. 14 in the Ontario Court's family division. It was the first time in Canada a hospital took a children's aid society to court for refusing to force chemotherapy that had an 80 to 95 per cent chance of curing the girl, who can't be named because of a publication ban.

Justice Gethin Edward specifically noted Hill's testimony was an important factor in his decision that traditional healing is an integral part of constitutionally-protected aboriginal culture and therefore, indigenous parents have a right to choose it over western medicine.

The decision was hailed as a major victory by First Nations across the country while many in the medical community saw it as a death sentence for the girl and other aboriginal children who follow in her footsteps.

Makayla Sault, an 11-year-old New Credit girl who also abandoned chemotherapy for traditional healing, died in January. At that time, the girl at the centre of the court case was cancer-free.

Both girls went to an alternative centre in Florida that's registered as a massage establishment and run by a nutritionist who claims a raw plant-based organic diet has

helped "thousands and thousands" of people reverse the most deadly types of cancer. Hill supported the families' decision to go to the institute, which also promotes a positive attitude and ridding your life of contaminants.

"The selection of the candidate of this award was certainly independent of that particular unfortunate and tragic story," said Padmos. "There would not have been a particular focus on any particular case. This is a nomination based on the body of work."

The case left a lingering distrust between Six Nations and the medical community.

"The fact that there is a recognition of her work can really help in bridging the divide that exists right now," said Andrew Koster, executive director of the Brant Children's Aid Society. "I think this is very encouraging."

Hill, who is a McMaster University-trained family physician, co-founded Juddah's Place in 2013 with traditional practitioner Elva Jamieson in Ohsweken. As well as seeing patients, the collaborative practice trains doctors and apprentices in traditional medicine.

She is also a former co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Students Health Sciences Office at McMaster and the faculty lead in aboriginal peoples' health in the department of family medicine since 2007.

"Receiving this award means something very personal to me," she said in a statement. "It acknowledges the value of a 'healing approach' to indigenous peoples' health that includes traditional indigenous knowledge and medicine practices as part of that approach."

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5525860-doctor-in-controversial-aboriginal-cancer-case-wins-award/>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

'It Wasn't Always This Way': An Indigenous Reflection on Women's History Month

[Sarah Sunshine Manning](#)

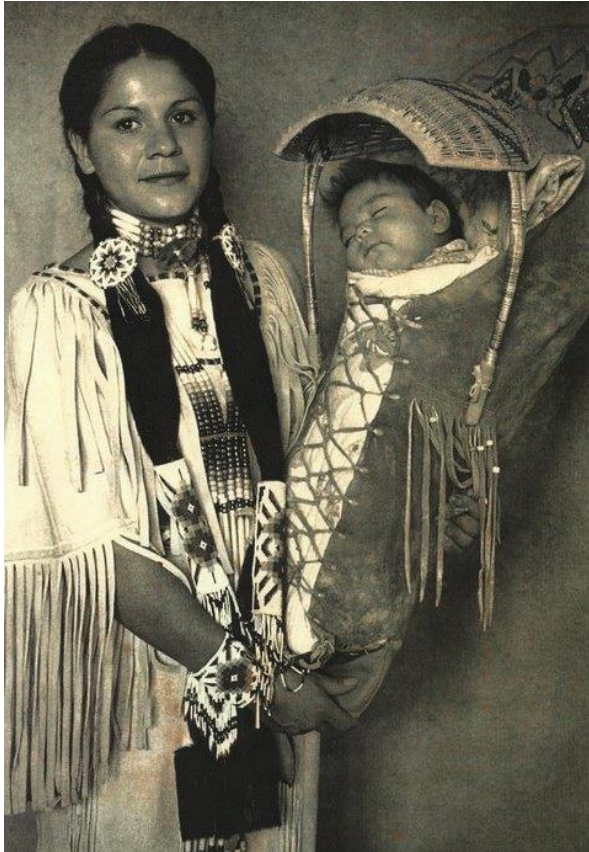
3/19/15

All March long, it is Women's History Month. Surely, indigenous women are a part of this devoted month as well.

Although it may seem trite to say, the fact that any demographic in society is given a month for "recognition" is immediately indicative of a historical marginalization so

deeply rooted, that a special month is necessary for society to even theoretically attempt to level the playing field (i.e. Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, etc.).

Nonetheless for this very special month, we remember the strength and timeless spirit of women. We devote this month to them.



My mother, holding my big sister, Dawn Day Woman, circa 1980.

Let us remember and acknowledge all of the women upon our Mother Earth, for the indispensable roles they have played since our creation.

As for indigenous women, it is often said that today we are the most invisible of the invisible, being far more marginalized than our American counterparts. It is worthwhile, though, to give pause and reflection to the ever changing condition and status of Indian women in our own communities, from pre-contact to today.

Though we once held the most revered and protected statuses in traditional tribal societies, Indian women have suffered tragically at the hands of colonization. Without question, we did not suffer in this manner in our communities before. Today, Indian women are among the most relegated women in America. Today, Indian women struggle to overcome staggering rates of abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and single-parenthood.

It wasn't always this way.

In this month may we recognize and remember who we once were as indigenous women. Let us honor the memory of the *many* remarkable indigenous women who came before us as mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunties, as nurturers, artisans, warrior women, preparers of love-filled meals, keepers of tradition, and so on. May we channel their strength, and evoke memories of a time when indigenous women were so highly revered as life-givers, and protected with a communal force so strong that every Indian woman was nurtured to her highest potential, and accordingly, she nurtured her children to their greatest potential too.

Through the many generations of elegant indigenous mastery, the women who came before us collectively wove the basket mold of what it is to be an Indian woman. That same treasured standard is *still* written in the collective memories of our DNA. With our ever present genetic memory, we possess the ability to bring back the spirit of the Indian women whose blood courses through our veins. Their stories of strength are all around us.

Reflecting on this special month, I was drawn to remember not just the most well-known female figures in Native American history, but the beautiful strength of my own mother and grandmothers. Beyond question, there are countless numbers of amazing Indian women who highlight *all* of our family histories. This is their month.

The women in my lineage continue to humble and inspire me without end. Their stories of love, resilience, and indigenous grace motivate me to be a better woman each and every day.

Reveling in my own mother's strength, I often recall a time when I was struggling in my second run at college as a single mother. In some of my weakest moments, the only thing that kept me from quitting was remembering the strength of my mom. While I was facing the challenge of raising just *one* child alone in school, I often wondered, "How in the world did my mom finish college on her own with *four* kids?" If my mom persevered given those circumstances, I knew I could, too. Her strength was my strength.

She tells me a story of when she was first considering college as a mother of four. One especially memorable conversation was with the grandmother who raised her. It is a memory that stuck with her forever. Her grandmother, my *great* grandmother (who I remember as my Tzo'o), so lovingly told her in our Paiute language, "OK, well that's good you want to go. If that's what you choose to do, then finish it. You persevere."

In my mom's second year in college, Tzo'o passed away. Heartbroken, my mom wanted to quit school and return home. But it was the powerful words from her beloved grandmother that brought her determination back to life. "Mawa queu doi," she told my mother, "You persevere." She knew she had to finish.

My Tzo'o, was completely blind, yet still succeeded at raising many children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Even despite her total lack of eye sight, she made traditional baby baskets and cradleboards, braided rugs, sewed quilts on an old-time trundle sewing machine, cooked and cleaned, planted trees, dug wild roots, harvested traditional foods and medicines, and gave thanks every morning with a long prayer over cedar and water. She persevered, and no limitation was ever too great. I cherish each tender memory of my Tzo'o. Remembering my spirited Tzo'o, it is no wonder how my mother became so strong.

Grandmother to my great grandmother, my Tzo'o, was my great, great, GREAT grandmother, Sound of Willows. She was the last generation of women in my family to know total freedom before white settlement, and the last generation of my lineage to have only a Paiute name. I imagine in total awe and wonder, just how strong and beautiful she must have been. Yet I know for sure, that the women in our lineage are still just as strong as all of our grandmothers once were. We just need to remember them, and by doing so, we remember our own strength.



My Great Grandmother (Tzo'o), Marjorie Sam Kelly, with her children, circa 1930.

My courageous mother was the first in her family to ever attempt and acquire a college degree. Although her and my dad weren't separated, he stayed back home on the reservation a good 125 miles away and continued to work for the tribe. Weekend after weekend, my mom drove us all back home to be together with our dad and reconnect with the land. Aside from our weekends with both parents, our mom raised us primarily alone during those five years, even still managing to ground us in prayer, read to us and tuck us in at night, feed us the best commod-recipes, clothe us in a mish-mash of home-made, second-hand and brand new clothes, and still keep smiles on our silly faces.

Without question, if my strength is from my mother's strength, and her strength from her mother's and her grandmother's, we must all possess the spirit of our ancestral matriarchs. The indigenous women who we all descend from were so firmly grounded in traditional teachings, and a tenacity to be remembered forever. Their strength lives within all of us. In my most challenging moments, I remember them all.

As the time-honored saying goes, all indigenous women together form the backbone of our nations. We need look no further than our own mothers and grandmothers for that

timeless indigenous strength and gentle wisdom to reinvigorate us in our most difficult life circumstances.

The strength of the indigenous woman endures. Embedded in the history of each Indian woman lies the means to bringing back the ways of honoring *ourselves* first, so that our nations can become strong again. If we truly wish to reclaim our rightful place as honored matriarchs within our tribal societies once more, let us start by connecting and reconnecting with our mothers and grandmothers. In honor of all Native women, we remember them.



Sarah Sunshine Manning

Sarah Sunshine Manning (Shoshone-Paiute, Chippewa-Cree) is a mother, educator, activist, and an advocate for youth.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/19/it-wasnt-always-way-indigenous-reflection-womens-history-month-159674>

One year after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, an Aboriginal ceremonial space is nearly ready

By Alexandra Zabjek, Edmonton Journal March 23, 2015



Wil Campbell (left) and Lewis Cardinal (right) are part of a group that has been working for years to get a site in the city for aboriginal ceremonies. Demolition work at the Fox Farms site in southwest Edmonton has started for this purpose.

EDMONTON - After years of lobbying and planning by community activists, Edmonton's urban aboriginal residents will soon have a sweat lodge, a ceremonial space integral to native culture.

The sweats at Kihciy Askiy, are on track to open this summer, with a \$2-million boost from city council and a promise to create more space for indigenous ceremonies and cultural activities.

The project on Fox Farms is taking off as the city hits the one-year anniversary since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded in Edmonton after four years of hearings across the country. The commission brought together thousands of people who listened to stories of residential school survivors and promises by dignitaries for a better future.

Mayor Don Iveson declared the year following the commission to be a year of reconciliation, and the city set three goals to prompt long-term changes in Edmonton's relationships with its indigenous residents. The first two goals dealt with education and youth engagement. But the third was to create more spaces for the celebration of aboriginal culture and traditions.

"In our tradition, going through sweat and such ceremonies are very important. It bolsters us, it gives us strength, it gives us pride in a sense of who we are and what we need to be doing with our lives," said community advocate Lewis Cardinal.

Seven months after the TRC arrived in Edmonton, and almost five years after grassroots efforts for the site first started, city council in November approved \$2-million for the initial phase of work at Kihciy Askiy.

"We're the only people who have to leave town to do our ceremonies and our prayers, because we don't have a temple, a church, or a mosque that we can go to that's accessible," said Cardinal.

“Because there’s such a large, young, urban aboriginal population, one of the critical points in ensuring they have access to a good life is to have access to their culture and their identity.”

Currently, indigenous people in Edmonton travel to Paul Band or Enoch or Alexander First Nation to participate in a sweat.

A grand council of elders from the Edmonton region will meet in May to discuss how the site will be set up and various protocols for use. With numerous aboriginal groups in the Edmonton region, each with different traditions surrounding sweat lodges, many decisions are still to be made.

“A sweat lodge is a place of meditation, prayer, spiritual teaching, for community gathering — people come for all of those reasons,” said Allen Benson, CEO of Native Counselling Services of Alberta, which will administer the site.

“If you’re going in as a spectator, you might end up burning and feeling really hot. But if you go in with your own reasons to grow and learn ... it’s a place to allow that to happen.”

Benson said all Edmontonians will be able to access the lands and meet with aboriginal elders. It will be a special place for groups such as foster children to connect with aboriginal heritage or for agencies that wish to do cultural awareness training.

The first phase of work at the site is getting the land ready for sweat lodge ceremonies, but future plans include the construction of a formal amphitheatre, gathering area, and permanent covered structures. Funding needs to be secured to continue the work.

One of the barriers to sweat lodges in the river valley has long been city bylaws that prevent fires in the area. But there are workarounds.

That the city is being proactive in ensuring this space can work, despite conflicts with modern bylaws, is a sign of progress, said Mike Chow, the city’s director of aboriginal and multicultural relations.

“There are lots of things you couldn’t have imagined three or four years ago that wouldn’t have been initiated or where the city wouldn’t have been proactive,” he said. “It’s a matter of, ‘how do we take things that have always been ‘the other’ and now make it part of the norm of what we do?’”

Kihciy Askiy means “sacred earth.” The site is located near Whitemud Creek at the former Fox Farm, and was an important ceremonial and gathering place. Cardinal hopes it will continue to be.

“It will leave something for my grandchildren ... and if they live here in the city, we’ll have places within our river valley, which is a very special and sacred location.”

MAYOR SPEAKS ON IMPORTANCE OF TREATY 6

For the past six months, Mayor Don Iveson has acknowledged Treaty 6 as part of his opening remarks at city council meetings. Iveson's decision to do so came out of his experiences at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission last year.

Iveson was named an honorary witness at the TRC in the spring. Later that year, he met with other honorary witnesses to discuss their ongoing role in promoting reconciliation in Canada. Around the same time he had a meeting with a representative from the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations. Here he describes that conversation.

“We talked about the oral history of the treaty from the indigenous perspective and what it means as a permanent bond of friendship between indigenous people from many first nations — 17 in all in Treaty Six area — and settlers. And then I went and read the treaty — which I hadn't done, I had a scant knowledge of it — I felt as a descendent of a settler, I feel obliged to do my part. And I think all people on both sides benefiting from the treaty, indigenous and non-indigenous, should recognize the significance of that treaty as a permanent bond of friendship. It's not a temporary thing, it doesn't have a sunset clause. It's a permanent sharing arrangement for these lands.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/year+after+Truth+Reconciliation+Commission+Aboriginal+ceremonial+space+nearly+ready/10912160/story.html>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Resource centre helps Inuit find work, stability in the big city

Ivrtivik centre to start fifth year of operation in Montreal

SARAH ROGERS , March 24, 2015 - 1:30 pm



From left, Charlotte Kadjuuk, Barbara Veevee, Jaqueline Evaloakjuk, Salamiva Ilimasaut, Alice (no last name provided), Johnny (name withheld) and Maata Oqutaq are some of the dozens of Montreal-based

Inuit who have received support finding work in the city through the Ivirtivik centre, run by the Kativik Regional Government. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



Ivirtivik client Barbara Veevee works on her resume March 19. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

MONTREAL — Barbara Veevee has the personality to match her fluorescent pink striped tee shirt; she's bright and energetic.

But her energy in the workplace has waned in recent months, said Veevee, who's worked a night shift cleaning offices for the last two years.

"I'm tired of my mop and trolley," said Veevee, who moved to Montreal from Pangnirtung 10 years ago.

She also has a 15-year-old son at home, in the suburb of Laval, with whom she'd like to spend more time.

Veevee is one of a handful of Inuit women seated around a large conference table in Montreal's Verdun neighbourhood at the Ivirtivik centre, an employment and education resource centre for Inuit in the city.

Behind Veevee, a row of computers where other clients quietly tap on keyboards while CBC Radio's Inuktitut-language newscast streams in the background.

Ivirtivik, [which began as a pilot project of the Kativik Regional Government in 2010](#), is about to go into its fifth year of operation.

Over the last five years, the centre has helped dozens of Montreal Inuit secure employment or enroll in training programs; in January 2014, the KRG opened a second Ivirtivik centre in Inukjuak.

In Montreal, the centre's three employment counsellors work with anywhere from 12 to 15 full-time participants at a time, helping clients to prepare resumés, scan job ads and develop computer, language or life skills to navigate the job market.

Veevee is one of the lucky ones. She's been recently employed and has a place to live. Many Inuit arrive in the city without a place to live or the support network even to get settled.

But although she's integrated into life in Montreal, this time around, Veevee wants to get back to her roots. She's looking for work at a local Inuit organization, "where I can talk my dialect and eat my country food."

She hasn't any new job leads, but at least for now, Veevee can speak Inuktitut with other job-seekers at the centre.

In the weeks or months it might take clients to find work, Ivirtivik also offers stability to unemployed Inuit and a place to connect with other resources for newcomers to the city.

Participants take part in the program weekdays from about 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and are paid for each day they attend — the equivalent of about \$30 a day, or less for those on welfare.

For Johnny, a 22-year-old who just came to Montreal from Inukjuak about a month ago, the centre has become something of a lifeline.

The young man, whose family name *Nunatsiaq News* chose not to publish, came south looking for a fresh start after struggling with drug addiction.

"I'm looking for a janitor job as soon as possible," he said. "I've been applying, but nothing yet."

He worked in Inukjuak as a night watchman and water delivery truck driver although neither job translates well to life in Montreal.

"But I've learned a lot here, like how to use a computer," he said.

For those like Johnny, who have no previous work experience in Montreal, Ivirtivik also provides its clients with actual work experience by having participants volunteer regularly with a few local food and clothing banks.

Once they've developed a relationship with those centres, they can even get a professional reference to use in their job search.

In many cases though, Ivirtivik clients end up using their unique language skills and Inuit expertise to find work.

Jacqueline Evaloakjuk has managed to find some good interpretation and translation contracts in Montreal since she relocated from Iqaluit in 2012 — one through McGill University's linguistics department.

She hopes to find more permanent work to support her family; in the coming weeks, Evaloakjuk will give birth to a baby girl, whom she plans to name Amelia.

But while she's strong in Inuktitut and English, Evaloakjuk struggles with French — a major challenge for many Inuit coming to a French-speaking province.

"I moved here without knowing any French," said the Nunavut native. "Now I need to learn French fast. But this is a really good resource place."

As part of the program, College Frontier comes into Ivirtivik to give a French class once a week. And most participants say the classes are important, as the ability to speak French makes a huge difference in finding work.

On March 18, the group visited the Montreal Aboriginal Employment Fair, where Salamiva Ilimasaut secured work doing French-English-Inuktitut translation for the North Quebec Module.

That's the organization that helps Nunavik Inuit navigate Montreal's health care system, which operates mainly in French.

Ilimasaut is fortunate to have learned French in elementary school in Kangiqsujuaq, where she lived before relocating to Montreal eight months ago.

She's spent the last two months at Ivirtivik preparing her resume and cover letter and applying for work. And it's paid off, she added.

"I'm overexcited — I'm so glad I got this job," she said. "Being here has helped me a lot."

Ivirtivik's current funding agreement with the federal government comes to an end March 31. The KRG is looking to the Quebec government to continue to fund the Ivirtivik centres in both Montreal and Inukjuak.



Ivirtivik's work area offers computer terminals and space for Inuit job seekers to scan job ads, do research and take workshops and French classes. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674resource_centre_helps_inuit_find_work_stability_in_the_big_city/

Aboriginal Politics

Yukon First Nations celebrate 20 years of self-government

Agreements signed two decades ago by Na-cho Nyak Dun, Champagne Aishihik, Teslin Tlingit and Vuntut Gwitchin

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 20, 2015 9:17 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 23, 2015 9:39 AM CT



Two decades ago, the Na-cho Nyak Dun, Champagne Aishihik, Teslin Tlingit and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations signed self-government agreements with the Yukon government. The occasion was marked by a night of celebration, dancing, music and laughter last night in Whitehorse, including these young dancers from the 4 First Nations. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Four Yukon First Nations marked 20 years of self-government last night at a celebration in Whitehorse.

Two decades ago, agreements were signed between the Yukon government and the Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Champagne Aishihik, Teslin Tlingit Council and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations.

'How far we've come when the premier of our territory dresses like us.'- *Steve Smith*

Though many at the celebration reflected on the past 20 years, others looked even further back and to the road ahead.

Kristina Kane, Chief of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council spoke of the importance of preserving culture and heritage.

"We Yukon first nations should be immensely proud our people have survived hundreds of years of social disruption and forces of oppression that were trying to ultimately assimilate and eradicate us. And yet here we are. We have endured," she said.



Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski spoke at Thursday night's event wearing a traditional vest. (Philippe Morin)

Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski spoke to the crowd wearing a buckskin vest decorated with bead work.

After the premier's address, Steve Smith, Chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations said the premier's clothing was an important symbol.

"When the first chiefs went down (to Ottawa) they were busy trying to get suit jackets, shirts and ties. They wanted to dress the part to meet with the government of Canada. How far we've come when the premier of our territory dresses like us."

Looking to the future

Carl Sidney, Chief of the Teslin Tlingit Council, said many promises of self-government are still unfulfilled.

"It is our dream and our hope that within another 20 years, we can have what we negotiated 20 years ago. Which is a government recognized by the other governments in Canada, and that our youth will be recognized and given all the opportunities that were envisioned when we started negotiating 30 years ago," he said.

"I could remember when people always talked about how rich we'll be when our land claims are all settled. And yet our people are still waiting," he said.

AFN representative mentions court battles

Speaking to the crowd, Mike Smith, Assembly of First Nations regional chief, recalled [a recent meeting](#) between Yukon First Nations Chiefs and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Bernard Valcourt.

"When the chiefs went to Ottawa not to long ago, they met with the minister of aboriginal affairs and he said you are not real governments. This was a total shock to our chiefs," he said.

"The government signed our agreement, but they forgot about it the second day. Today we're in court on land use planning. Tomorrow we're going to go to court probably on the YESAB just to protect what we have in our agreements," he said.

Eileen Peter, who works as a heritage officer for the Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation in Mayo, mentioned support for protecting the [Peel River watershed](#) and received a round of applause.

"I think we've heard a lot of people mention youth and youth and young people and the children of tomorrow — and we're here," she said. "We have been involved with the Peel case and making our voices heard."

The anniversary of self-government comes as Yukon First nations are involved in a variety of legal battles with the territorial and federal government including a [clash over Bill S-6](#), a bill to amend the Yukon Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment Board.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-celebrate-20-years-of-self-government-1.3002884>

Pam Palmater says feds 'are already spying on me'



[Michelle Zilio](#), CTVNews.ca

Published Sunday, March 22, 2015 10:31AM EDT

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A well-known First Nations activist and lawyer says she is being tracked by the federal government departments.

Pam Palmater, a Mi'kmaq lawyer and professor at Ryerson University, [told CTV's Question Period](#) that access-to-information documents show that she is being tracked by three federal government departments.

"I wrote an access to information request to CSIS (the Canadian Security Intelligence Service), National Defence, the RCMP and Indian Affairs to determine whether or not they were following (or) surveilling me in any way and three out of the group all confirmed that they were," she said.

Palmater did not indicate which three of the four departments are tracking her.

Palmater said the ATIPs indicate the government started tracking her prior to her involvement in the highly publicized Idle No More movement, which swept across Canada in early 2013.

Palmater's concern about government surveillance of First Nations activists comes as Parliament debates the Conservatives' controversial anti-terror bill, C-51, which increases powers for Canada's security agencies to track threats. She worries some wording in the bill may lump First Nations and environmental activists into that group.

"Any activity by anyone in Canada which relates to or poses a potential threat to things like the economy, critical infrastructure, diplomatic relations, territorial integrity and sovereignty of all things, can be on this terror list," said Palmater.

“So that essentially puts in the realm any First Nation that's ever declared sovereignty in this territory and any environmental group that's ever interrupted the economy.”

But the government has said the legislation won't target activists like Palmater. Speaking to the House of Commons public safety committee on March 12, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety Roxanne James addressed concerns raised by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde that First Nations activism will be viewed as “activity that undermines the security of Canada.”

“I can't think of a single instance in my history -- I'm 49 years old -- where a First Nation has brought something that would blow up infrastructure, that would kill innocent lives, and I can't think of anything in history that would connect First Nations to being a group that would be within the information sharing act,” said James.

Palmater rejected such claims.

“They are already spying on me,” said Palmater. “So right now, without this anti-terrorism bill, my rights are already being violated.”

Canadian Bar Association concerned about bill

The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) expressed similar concerns about the anti-terror bill on Question Period, joining the growing chorus of criticism against the legislation.

The organization is particularly concerned about the government's failure to include any new parliamentary oversight for Canada's security agencies in the legislation.

“The concern for us is with almost a rewriting of the mandate for CSIS; there isn't a commensurate increase of on-the-ground operational, over-the-shoulder oversight for the organization,” said Eric Gottardi, of the CBA.

Gottardi said it is also unclear why the new powers are necessary, as many of them are already covered under existing legislation.

The Commons public safety committee will continue its study of the bill next week, where it will hear from a number of new witnesses, including Palmater and the CBA.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/pam-palmater-says-feds-are-already-spying-on-me-1.2291711>

Anti-terror bill targets aboriginals: First Nations lawyer, MP

First posted: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 01:02 PM EDT | Updated: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 05:22 PM EDT



People protest against Bill C51 at City Hall in Calgary, Saturday, March 14, 2015. Mike Drew/Calgary Sun/QMI

A Mi'kmaq lawyer fighting against the government's anti-terror bill asked members of a Commons committee Tuesday to compare the number of Canadians who have died on home soil in terror attacks to the number of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Pam Palmater, who holds a chair in indigenous governance at Toronto's Ryerson University, said the controversial legislation targets aboriginal people's way of life and their right to protest. She said C-51 "captures everything under Idle No More" and could put aboriginal people in jail.

She said she's also concerned about a section of the bill that would outlaw terrorist propaganda and could be used against First Nations people.

"All we have left are our thoughts, and our private thoughts will now be criminalized," Palmater told MPs.

"My declaration of sovereignty — that kind of material on my computer could be considered terrorism, a threat to national security."

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs president Stewart Phillip called for the bill to be scrapped. He told the hearing the "heavy-handed powers" the bill would grant are "absolutely appalling."

"We believe Bill C-51 is more about increasing the output of the tarsands and facilitating the heavy oil pipeline proposals across this country," he said.

The First Nations speakers join opposition MPs, civil liberties advocates and the Assembly of First Nations, who have said the proposed law is too broad and would violate the freedom and privacy of Canadians.

The committee heard from Insp. Steve Irwin of the Toronto Police Service, who praised how the bill would facilitate information sharing between departments, which he says is important in the fight against terrorism.

"Absolutely at the federal level it is crucial that information be allowed to be shared, but there has to be accountability for that and, certainly, I think it's important to respect all our rights."

Conservative MP Diane Ablonczy asked Irwin about concerns C-51 would target protesters.

"For our system to work, we do need people to protest, we do need checks and balances in the system," he said.

NDP MPs Niki Ashton and Romeo Saganash both raised Palmater's concerns in question period later on Tuesday.

In response, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Minister Steven Blaney pointed to a section of the bill saying it does not apply to "lawful advocacy, protest, dissent and artistic expression."

But Saganash, who is a member of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi in Quebec, said he had "all too often" seen law and order authorities call indigenous protests illegal, and that First Nations people deserved more than government "rhetoric" about how C-51 would not affect their rights.

NDP MP Rosane Dore Lefebvre alleged there was "dissent" in the government ranks about the bill, referring to a statement by Michael Chong, an Ontario Conservative MP.

In a news release dated March 17, Chong said, "while I fully support Bill C-51, I also believe we need greater oversight of Canadian security and intelligence agencies by a parliamentary committee of elected MPs, who are directly and democratically accountable to Canadians."

In question period, Blaney replied that Canada's model for oversight was "the envy" of the world.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/03/24/anti-terror-bill-targets-aboriginals-first-nations-lawyer>

Paul Davis heading to Labrador for meetings with aboriginal leaders

Premier hopes to patch up relations following export exemption for Vale, comments by Keith Russell

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 24, 2015 7:06 PM NT Last Updated: Mar 24, 2015 7:06 PM NT



Premier Paul Davis announced Tuesday that he will meet early next month with aboriginal leaders in Labrador in an attempt to smooth relations and get a better understanding of their concerns. (CBC)

Premier Paul Davis will be travelling to Labrador early next month for meetings with aboriginal leaders in an attempt to smooth relations following a dust-up over mineral exports and comments by one of his cabinet ministers.

Davis announced Tuesday that he will meet with Nunatsiavut Government President Sarah Leo and Innu Nation Grand Chief Anastatia Qupee, likely during the week of April 6.

Both aboriginal leaders have been critical of the province's recent decision to extend the export exemption for Vale, allowing the mining giant to ship more nickel concentrate from its mine at Voisey's Bay outside of the province for processing.

The province has said the extension was necessary in order to give the company more time to complete its nickel processing plant in Long Harbour, Placentia Bay, and to avoid a shutdown at the mine in Voisey's Bay, which employs some 475 workers, most of whom are aboriginal.

Premier defends lack of consultation

The aboriginal groups have complained that they were not consulted before a decision was made, but Davis made it clear Tuesday that consultations were not necessary.

However, he will seek to meet with the two leaders in an effort to ensure good, respectful relations.

Davis also addressed the controversial comments made by Aboriginal and Labrador Affairs Minister Keith Russell.

During a recent encounter at an airport with an unnamed Nunatsiavut Government minister, Russell challenged the minister to go ahead and take legal action over the Vale decision, saying "go ahead and sue us, we'll win anyway."

The comment angered aboriginal leaders, with some saying it was disrespectful.

Russell refused to apologize during recent media interviews, but softened his position in a statement emailed to *The Labradorian* newspaper this week.

In it, Russell said he values the relationship he has with aboriginal leaders in Labrador, and apologized to anyone who was offended by his comments.

"I meant no disrespect," he wrote.

Comments take out of context

Davis said he has spoken with Russell about the importance of making sure his comments are "appropriate in the circumstances and discussions that you're having."

Davis added that he's satisfied that Russell has offered an apology, and believes his comments were taken out of context.

"He assures me he meant no offence to anybody," the premier told reporters.

Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi NDP MHA Lorraine Michael said in the legislature Tuesday that government members should undergo sensitivity training.

"I'm not convinced that is necessary," said Davis, adding, "it's not something we haven't already done."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/paul-davis-heading-to-labrador-for-meetings-with-aboriginal-leaders-1.3007522>

Bill C-51: First Nation chief worries 'lives will be lost'

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 25, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 25, 2015 6:00 AM ET



Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig Chief Donny Morris says he's concerned that Bill C-51 will put the lives of First Nations activists at risk during legitimate land-based protests.

A chief, who once went to jail for defending his First Nation's traditional territory during a mining dispute in northern Ontario, says he has grave concerns about Bill C-51.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig Chief Donny Morris sent a letter to his MP, Natural Resources Greg Rickford, asking him to withdraw support for the proposed anti-terrorism law.

Morris and six others from Kitchenuhmaykoosib went to jail in 2008 after peacefully protesting mining activity near Big Trout Lake, about 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ont. He's worried that under Bill C-51 the consequences for Indigenous activists will be much worse.

"I take this to my heart," Morris said. "Because I know it will happen. It happened to us. We got sentenced. We got sent to jail, what's going to stop an officer from taking that next step."

That next step, in Morris' mind, is First Nations people being shot by police during land-based disputes.

"That's what I don't want to see in the future to our native brothers and sisters," he said. "That they lose their life over something that is sacred to us."

'I'm still being watched'

The dispute at Kitchenuhmaykoosib was resolved in 2009 when Ontario bought out the claims of the mining company involved. The First Nation later developed its own watershed declaration and protocols to protect its traditional territory from unwanted development.

Still, Morris worries about how his activism is perceived by government.

"I'm still being watched or monitored and viewed as a... terrorist," he said. "That's the sad part and the part that hurts me the most."

Rickford has a large number of First Nations in his riding and should consider the implications of the anti-terror law on them, Morris said, adding he hasn't had a response to the letter.

A spokesperson for Rickford told CBC News that the Minister received the letter from Morris on Tuesday and "will respond in due course."

"The legislation is clear: our security agencies can only target those who pose a risk to Canada, and not those engaged in legitimate dissent," Alexandra Lemieux said in an email.

The House of Commons public safety committee is holding hearings on Bill C-51 this week.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/bill-c-51-first-nation-chief-worries-lives-will-be-lost-1.3007683>

Peguis First Nation elects new chief, Cindy Spence

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 26, 2015 8:16 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 26, 2015 8:16 AM CT



Cindy Spence is the new chief of Peguis First Nation, Manitoba's largest First Nations community. (Facebook)

Manitoba's Peguis First Nation has a new chief.

Cindy Spence beat incumbent Glenn Hudson in a tight race that went late Wednesday. Also, three out of the four new councillors on the First Nation, located about 145 kilometres north of Winnipeg, are women.

Peguis holds band and council elections every two years and Hudson, who was first elected in 2007, has held off challenges from Spence — as well as others — in every election since then.

Peguis is the largest First Nations community in the province, with a population of more than 7,330 people.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/peguis-first-nation-elects-new-chief-cindy-spence-1.3010250>

Premier: George Abbott out because B.C. treaty process needs reform

[Lindsay Kines](#) / Times Colonist
March 26, 2015 06:00 AM



Premier Christy Clark said her cabinet vetoed the appointment of former Liberal minister George Abbott as chief of the B.C. Treaty Commission because her government wants to reform the entire treaty process.

Photograph By ADRIAN LAM, Times Colonist

Premier Christy Clark said her cabinet vetoed the appointment of former Liberal minister George Abbott as chief of the B.C. Treaty Commission because her government wants to reform the entire treaty process.

Clark said cabinet decided to stop investing in a system that has cost \$600 million and produced just four treaties in 22 years. “We have to be able to move faster and we have to find a way to include more First Nations in the process,” she said. “Fifty out of 200 First Nations involved in the process? That’s not enough. So it was a policy decision ... not to appoint a treaty commissioner.

“In terms of next steps — whether or not the treaty commission will be changed, whether or not it will continue to exist, how all that future will unfold with respect to treaties — is going to be something that we do together with First Nations.”

Clark said the decision evolved over many months, and she admitted making a “mess” of communicating the changes to Abbott.

The ex-minister was in transition meetings with current chief commissioner Sophie Pierre last week when he learned that cabinet had nixed his appointment. He was supposed to start work April 1.

“The communication with George was terrible,” Clark said. “Ultimately, I need to take responsibility for that. George is someone that I counted on for two years when he was a senior cabinet minister in my government and a major contributor policy-wise and strategically to things that we did. I have a great deal of respect for him.”

NDP Leader John Horgan said Clark did more than make a mess of communications. He said the decision not to appoint Abbott blindsided First Nations as well as the federal government and undercut more than two decades of treaty work in B.C.

“In my own community, three First Nations are at the table, near final agreement,” said Horgan, who represents Juan de Fuca. “They now have no confidence that they’re going to be able to achieve that after investing significant resources.

“I think it’s a shame. I don’t disagree with those who suggest that the process can be revitalized. You don’t do it by blowing it up without talking to your partners.”

The First Nations Summit said it was “taken aback and seriously disappointed” by the decision to withdraw Abbott’s appointment and ignore a recent chiefs’ resolution that formalized his appointment.

Grand Chief Edward John said it was “not very gracious” treatment by government and raised doubts about its trustworthiness. “I’m sure it says a lot about government commitment, and agreements that are reached, that they simply can just disregard them,” he said.

Clark insists there is “a broad consensus” among First Nations that the current treaty process has not worked. “If we keep going at the pace we’re going over the last 22 years, it will be a century before we conclude all the treaties in British Columbia.”

She said First Nations have sat outside economic development for too long and asking them to wait another 100 years is too much. “We have to do better for First Nations and that’s what we’re trying to do.”

Direct Link: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/premier-george-abbott-out-because-b-c-treaty-process-needs-reform-1.1804829>

Aboriginal Sports

First Nations teens' trek for hockey leads to travel, triumph then tragedy

Girl's death on the way home brings sadness to a happy tourney that had some trekking over frozen water, driving for days or boarding small planes



Summer Rayn Butterfly of the Moose Factory Scrappers hugs the cup her team won at the Hershey Centre following their championship 1-0 win on Thursday. Summer was named MVP of tournament of midget A girls championship.

By: [Tara Deschamps](#) Staff Reporter, Published on Thu Mar 19 2015

For as long as she can remember, Summer Rayn Butterfly has counted down the days until March Break.

The school-less week is spent by the 17-year-old gliding around an ice rink 1,100 kilometres from home with First Nations friends she rarely gets to see. The majority of them hail from far-flung corners of the province where they live on reserves or in remote areas with a single arena.

But what brings them all together every year is their love of the game, a deep-seated passion that outweighs the usual teenage March Break yearnings for vacations on exotic beaches or days spent sleeping in to well past noon.

Armed with sticks, skates and plenty of padding, Summer and her Moose Factory Scrapper teammates meet up for the Little Native Hockey League tournament. This year's iteration, the last for which Butterfly was eligible to play, was spread out across four Mississauga arenas.

It was there that 178 teams of aboriginal children duked it out on ice hoping to follow in the footsteps of tournament greats turned NHL stars —Ted Nolan and Jonathan Cheechoo.

For many, it was their first time venturing out into the big city. Hockey moms toting around spare gear and chasing after young ones who peppered the stands, told stories of their children gaping at skyscrapers and pointing in awe at the city lights as night fell on the GTA.

Years ago, the stark differences felt like culture shock for Summer, who grew up in Moose Factory, an island community located at the bottom of James Bay.

“I remember being amazed looking around at the city when I was younger,” she recalled. “I come from a small town of only 3,000 and this was such a big place with so many people.”

Over eight years’ worth of tournaments, she’s gotten used to the 1,100-kilometre journey from Moose Factory to Mississauga. Those who make the trek contend with Moose River, an unpredictable body of water that can only be crossed by vehicle when the ice freezes over.

They had heard of others who hired coach buses or rallied drivers to get players from small Ontario nooks to Thunder Bay, where they could fly to the city. Event organizers said they even knew of some who hitchhiked their way to the 44-year-old tournament, taking two or three days to get there.



Moose Factory Scappers watch their team during the third period action against the Batchewana Attack. The midget girls championship of the Little Native Hockey League Tournament was played out at the Hershey Centre in Mississauga.

For the thousands who attended, the safe journeys made to the tournament were reason for celebration, but the trek home was tinged with irreconcilable sadness when it claimed the life of a young girl.

Ember Wynne, a 13-year-old bantam player, died in a crash on her way home to Red Rock Township on Wednesday. The teen was travelling along Highway 529 in Magnetawan First Nation when a van she was riding in hit a transport truck, killing Ember, William Tuck, 71, and 3-month-old Myah Kowtias.



13-year-old Ember Wynne was killed in a vehicle accident with two others on March 18, 2015. They were travelling home from the Little NHL tournament in Mississauga.

Teammates and event organizers said the Atikameksheng Eagles defender was thrilled when the Eagles won back-to-back matches. Event organizers, who shared their condolences about the tragedy, were told Ember was grinning and excited about her performance.

“Happiness and sorry don’t oftentime mix, but in this situation it may,” tournament president Marvin Assinewai told the Star. He noted that Ember’s life had been honoured on the tournament’s final day with a traditional blanket ceremony and other fundraising activities planned by the Anishinabek Nations.

Despite the heart-breaking incident, he said players stayed strong and still took the rinks in Ember’s honour.

“It’s all about the love of the game and being out on the ice,” he said.

Caitlyn Alisappi, Summer’s teammate, agreed. Her love for hockey got her crammed into a car with her boyfriend and a pack of other boys on a non-stop, full-day ride to Mississauga.

“I play back home (in Moose Factory) with boys because there aren’t enough girls to make a team, but here, there are girls and it’s really nice to finally get to play together,” she said.

Plus, unlike her male teammates back home, the girls she played with at the tournament swapped gossip and went off on a few fun detours, usually involving local movie theatres or shopping malls.

“Whenever I text the girls to get them out to a game early, they are always shopping,” said Scrappers coach and Summer’s dad, Mark. “A lot of them don’t have big malls back home or all the stores the city does.”



Moose Factory Scrappers Tessa Dobson, left to right, Shaiyena Cote and Summer Butterfly take a skate around the ice at the Hershey Centre following their championship 1-0 win.

He admitted to ribbing his daughter about her search for a prom dress in between games, but it didn’t affect her play.

She scooped up the tournament’s MVP award minutes after a nail-biter 1-0 championship win for her team.

When the buzzer sounded, signaling the end of the match, the Scrappers flooded the ice, piling up on one another in a collective heap of relief.

Pointing at the celebrating girls, together at the tournament for one last time, Mark whispered, “That’s what makes the trip worth it.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/03/19/love-of-hockey-brings-first-nations-kids-from-across-province-to-mississauga.html>

North West River Inuk Collin Baikie wins first professional MMA fight

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 24, 2015 4:59 AM NT Last Updated: Mar 24, 2015 4:59 AM NT



Mixed martial artist Collin Baikie, 25, won his first professional fight at Rivals MMA two weeks ago in Montreal. (CBC)

Collin Baikie returned to his hometown of North West River in central Labrador last week, after winning his first professional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fight in Montreal.

Baikie, 25, defeated Brett Hart in a lightweight bout promoted by Rivals MMA on March 13.

"It was just one of the best feelings of my life," said Baikie, who trains at the Tristar Gym in Montreal.

"After I won I just felt a big relief come over me just like, anything is possible."

Baikie was originally set to fight at 170 pounds against Kevin Genereux, but all of his opponents backed out.



Collin Baikie shows his father and friends video of his first professional mixed martial arts fight. (CBC)

"I had to lose 15 pounds in two weeks," he said. "It is hard on the body, but as long as you prepare your mind to do it, it's a lot easier."

No place like home

Baikie started with mixed martial arts when he was a teenager, and credits sports within the community as helping him become the athlete he is today.

"I'm really proud of my Inuit heritage and I really think that's a big part of becoming a fighter and who I am," Baikie told CBC News. "I think that having that aboriginal warrior blood in me really brings out the best in me."

Leander Baikie, Collin Baikie's father, said his son is an inspiration to the entire area.

"[He's] very dedicated, very set on his goals, and where he wants to see himself in life," Leander Baikie said.

"It really proves that you can achieve their goals in life, if you put your time and effort into it, but it really pays off in the long run."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/north-west-river-inuk-collin-baikie-wins-first-professional-mma-fight-1.3005733>

Players from six Curve Lake teams get a taste of competition, culture at March Break First Nations tourney

EXAMINER STAFF

Tuesday, March 24, 2015 11:06:18 EDT PM



Curve Lake Screaming Eagles tyke (Black) teammates Grady Taylor (left) and Danika Jacobs show off the C Division championship trophy their team earned at the Little NHL First Nation youth hockey tournament in Mississauga during the March Break. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Curve Lake, with some players who had never played an organized hockey game, showed its pride at the annual Little NHL Tournament for First Nations children.

While some medals were brought home from the March Break event in Mississauga, the largest yet with more than 170 teams, it's much more than a hockey tournament, say organizers.

"The tournament's motto, In the Spirit of Sportsmanship, Citizenship, Education and Respect, guides participants to a much more meaningful cultural experience than can be had simply by winning or losing," states a write-up from Curve Lake team officials.

Players from the six Curve Lake teams left with new friendships, a better understanding of their cultural heritage and healthy respect for sport.

The Curve Lake Screaming Eagles Tyke (White) team, many of whom had never played in a game, compiled a 1-3 record in the Tyke Recreation Division.

"This division represents everything good about this tournament" said manager Michael Jacobs. "There are nothing but smiles on the ice from our players and they represented our community wonderfully."

Goal scorers included Bella McCue, Josh Thompson (Hiawatha) and Jaxon Taylor. Future Stars from Curve Lake on this team included Naomi Coppaway, Carmie McCue, Connor Gray, Jordan Taylor, Cienna Taylor, William Huff and Denver Knott. Brothers Yanick and Aaron Abraham joined the team for this event from Long Lake First Nation in the far north. The team was led by coach Richard McCue, assistant Lionel Girard and trainer Laurie Hockaday.

The Screaming Eagles (Black) team were C Division champs in the Tyke competitive division with strong team defence. After faltering in the first two games against Walpole Island and Iroquois Stars, the 4-6 year olds rallied to beat Six Nations Blackhawks 4-3 and Moose Factory 3-2 in the final.

Sierra Jacobs, Goldie Whetung and Danika Jacobs played strong defence and goalies Camden Williams and Kenzie McIntyre played well. Grady Taylor, Damien Taylor and Lawson Whetung were offensive support for goal scorers Ashton Bell, Dash Adams (Akwasasne) and Thayer Thompson (Akwasasne). The coach was Matt McIntyre, assistant Corey Taylor, trainer John Lawson and manager Michael Jacobs.

Competing in the novice competitive division, the Curve Lake Cubs played hard in losing four close contests to Aamjiwnaang, Oneida, Wikwemikong and Moose Cree. Scorers included Quinn Jacobs, Emerson Taylor, Mason Williams and Abigail Jacobs. Goalie Liam Shaw held strong in net in front of defence Cash Jacobs, Kenia Coppaway and

Matthew McDowall. Forwards included Emikah Taylor, McKenzie Taylor, Marissa Taylor-Williams, Sam Jacobs, Nolan Jacobs, Colby Capalbo, Romy Kazakevich and Alex Taylor. They were coached by Todd Jacobs and Gordie Taylor and managed by Shane Taylor.

The Cedar Bay Williams Outfitters Jr. Wangers, comprising players from house league to AAA level, were 3-1 losing in the atom A division semifinals.

They beat Moose Cree 9-0, Six Nations 3-2, Garden River 10-5. before falling 3-2 to Delaware. Players included brothers Dalyn and Sidney Wakely, Mikayla Williams, Tristan Williams, Carter Jacobs, Kristopher Jacobs, Louis Jacobs, Blake Jacobs, Rivor Taylor, Corson Taylor, Evan Knott-Wright, Noah Capalbo and Cohen Bell. The team has, in the last five years, won an A title, was an A finalist, won a B title and was defeated in the semifinals.

This year, the team played with a special purpose dedicating their play to the memory of Wellington "Wang" Williams who always supported and watched youth sports and recreation in Curve Lake. They were coached by Michael Williams, trainer Jason Wakely and manager Jeff Jacobs.

The peewee Screaming Eagles fought their way to the recreation division A semifinals with a 6-3 win over Fort William, 10-0 win over Albany and 11-7 win over Wikwemikong. A highlight was a penalty shot made by Gavin Jacobs that brought the team to the semifinals where they overcame a two-goal deficit to force overtime and a shootout.

The team was led by captain Clayton Shaughnessy and assistant captains Mason Tardiff (Hiawatha) and Emerson Jacobs. Playing forward were Logan Dixon, Luci Taylor, Olivia Williams, Hunter Cole, Anthony Bamford (Fort Albany) and Gavin Jacobs. While Gavin Ireland, Hayden Coppaway, Deon McGregor (Sagamok) and Delaney Osborne (Hiawatha) were on the defensive line. Protecting the crease were Erica McMillan and Colin Simpson (Alderville). Staff included coach Jon Douglas, assistant Ryan Douglas, trainer Eric Knott and manager Melanie Jacobs.

The bantam Screaming Eagles lost in the competitive division's B final with Terron Taylor scoring for Curve Lake against Aamjiwnaang First Nation.

The bantams were led by captain Ryan Shaughnessy, top scorer Colton Atkins and defensive standouts Danielle MacDowall, Braydon Crowe (Alderville), Ross Welch (Walpole Island) and Taylor Hoggarth. Goaltender Jordan LaForme (Mississaugas of the Credit) kept the team within striking distance each game. AJ Knott, Ben Fleguel, Theo Jacobs, Christopher Salerno (Magnetawan), Connor Cowie (Hiawatha) rounded out the hard working team.

The team lost a 3-2 overtime heartbreaker to Six Nations, beat Akwesasne 4-2 and lost 4-2 to Batchewana who won the A final.

The coach was Peter Hoggarth, assistant Norm Atkins, trainer Kyle Taylor and manager Aricka Fleguel.

Direct Link: <http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2015/03/24/players-from-six-curve-lake-teams-get-a-taste-of-competition-culture-at-march-break-first-nations-tourney>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Herring roe commercial harvest will not open this year, First Nation announces

Bella Bella, B.C. — The Canadian Press

Published Friday, Mar. 20 2015, 2:42 PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Mar. 20 2015, 2:42 PM EDT

The latest B.C. First Nation to condemn herring roe harvesting in its territory says it is closing a commercial fishery as it undertakes its own analysis of fish stocks.

The Heiltsuk Nation on B.C.'s Central Coast says it has given the federal government notice that it will not allow the fishery to open this year because stocks are too weak and must rebuild.

It has criticized what it calls "flawed methods" of forecasting herring returns from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and says it is working with its own team of experts to establish an accurate measure.

The Heiltsuk Nation is the latest aboriginal band to speak out in a long-standing battle against the reopening of commercial herring fisheries with warnings of perilously low stock numbers.

The Haida Nation in the remote community of Haida Gwaii recently won an injunction to block a planned fishery, after joining two other First Nations to fight a fishery's reopening last year.

The DFO did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/herring-roe-commercial-harvest-will-not-open-this-year-first-nation-announces/article23556963/>

Ontario's Ring Of Fire, Formerly 'The Next Oilsands,' Sold For Peanuts

Posted: 03/23/2015 9:56 am EDT Updated: 03/23/2015 9:59 am EDT



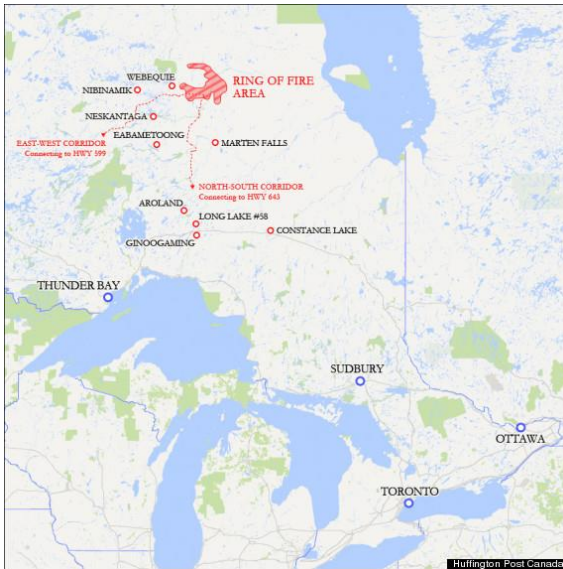
A junior miner will soon be the biggest player in Ontario's fledgling Ring of Fire mining development, after agreeing to pay US\$20 million for the properties of Cliffs Natural Resources, a U.S. mining giant who has abandoned hope of developing the area.

Toronto-based Noront Resources is getting quite the deal for about 103 mining claims -- including Cliffs' flagship \$3.3 billion Black Thor chromite deposit -- in the region estimated to be worth \$50 billion during the height of the commodity boom. Cliffs paid \$240 million for the assets in 2009.

The market has since shifted and a lack of concrete movement in talks between First Nations, government and developers has turned many miners off of the 5,000 square kilometre area said to be rich with chromite, copper, zinc, platinum and other valuable metals.

The Ring of Fire was [once touted as Canada's next oilsands](#), but interest in the area has fallen off and the prospects for development in the remote region, located on First Nations land, have dimmed.

Cliffs decided to suspend its projects in the area in late 2013, citing numerous delays and difficulties that prevented the project from moving ahead. It was also drowning in debt amid a flagging market for commodities. It has shuttered its Toronto office and laid off many of its Canadian employees. In January, the company sought creditor protection for its Bloom Lake iron ore mine in Quebec after failing to find a buyer.



The people of the surrounding Matawa First Nations are ambivalent about the Ring of Fire. They have deep concerns about the impact a new mining region will have on their pristine land, on the animals and fish on which they rely and on their way of life which involves a deep connection to the land.

The area is not accessible by road. Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne has promised \$1 billion to build one.

Cliffs' decision to suspend operations in the area was viewed as a death knell for the project by many analysts. The U.S. mining giant had [called the project unprecedented](#) both in the opportunity to open a new mining region and in the scale of the challenges the company faced.

Upon closing, Noront will own some 360 claims in the area, about 65 per cent of the Ring of Fire, located some 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

"This purchase consolidates the world-class discoveries made in the Ring of Fire," said Noront President and CEO Alan Coutts.

"It also underscores Noront's long-standing belief and commitment to the region. We have made significant investments in the Ring of Fire and our team has become experts in the region from both a technical and social point of view. We also believe in the considerable exploration upside which we are eager to develop."

Noront is financing the deal with debt. It took out a US\$22.5 million loan from miner Franco Nevada Corp., which -- in addition to interest -- will receive a three per cent royalty in the Black Thor chromite deposit and a two per cent royalty over all of Noront's other properties in the region, except for its flagship Eagle's Nest deposit.

For more on development in Ontario's Ring of Fire, check out Huffington Post Canada's [award-nominated Staking Claim series](#).

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/03/23/ring-of-fire-ontario-noront-cliffs_n_6923110.html

First Nations oppose Noront, Cliffs deal in Ring of Fire

'We're not in such a rush. We're willing to do this well,' Eabametoong Chief Elizabeth Atlookan says

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 26, 2015 1:23 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 26, 2015 5:43 PM ET



Eabametoong First Nation Chief Elizabeth Atlookan says her community won't be rushed into mining decisions that could harm the largely "pure and untouched" land where they live. (Jody Porter/CBC)

Plans by Noront Resources to buy Cliffs' chromite assets in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire mining area are a "barrier to future opportunities" and a "threat to aboriginal and treaty rights," say First Nations chiefs opposed to the deal.

Noront announced the \$20-million deal on Monday. The purchase requires court approval and won't be finalized until at least mid-April because Cliffs' Quebec subsidiary is in restructuring proceedings under the Companies's Creditors Arrangement Act.

The Matawa Chiefs Council, representing the eight First Nations closest to the proposed mine sites, went public Wednesday with plans to stall the deal before it is finalized.

"Our rights to the chromite deposit are recognized by the fact that the province and mining companies have already made promises to share revenues and benefits from development," said Neskantaga Chief Peter Moonias. "We should have had a voice in the sale."

News of the deal came at the same time chiefs said they were told the province had set an April 1 deadline to make a decision on the terms of reference for Noront's environmental assessment for another project, its proposed nickel mine in the Ring of Fire.

'Trying to please Noront'



'Just because they look down on us, doesn't mean we're going to look up to them,' Constance Lake Chief Fred Sackaney says of mining company Noront. (Jody Porter/CBC)

Constance Lake Chief Fred Sackaney said the timing is suspicious.

"The government is trying to please Noront so that they can satisfy investors and the public that they're making progress in the north," he said. "They show a lot of disrespect to First Nations. But just because they look down on us doesn't mean we're going to look up to them."

Chiefs said they need more time and help from experts to analyze the thousands of pages of documents involved.

"We're not in such a rush," said Eabametoong Chief Elizabeth Atlookan. "Even though we're the communities that are poverty stricken, we put up with less-than, yet we're willing to do this well."

Ontario's Minister of Northern Development and Mines told CBC News on Thursday that there is no fixed timeline for the environmental assessment.



Northern Development and Mines Minister Michael Gravelle said on Thursday there is no fixed deadline for the next step in Noront's environmental assessment. (Jeff Walters/CBC)

"I'm certainly not viewing this as one where there is an absolute deadline in place," Michael Gravelle said. "I view it instead as one where it's clear, certainly in discussions with the company, that there's a need for them to move towards the next part of the process."

The province is attempting to strike a balance between criticisms the project is not moving fast enough and the need to "do it right" with the support of First Nations, Gravelle said.

A spokesperson for Noront said the company "is working with First Nations and will continue to work with First Nations" in the Ring of Fire.

Late Thursday afternoon, Noront President Alan Coutts told CBC News that he has offered to meet with Matawa chiefs in Thunder Bay on Friday.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-oppose-noront-cliffs-deal-in-ring-of-fire-1.3010410>

Heiltsuk First Nation vows to protect herring fishery 'by any means necessary'

Talks with federal officials failed to produce agreement

March 26, 2015



Adult and juvenile Pacific herring.

BELLA BELLA — The Heiltsuk Nation is vowing to protect herring in its territory by any means necessary as it readies boats to defend a contentious fishery on B.C.'s Central Coast.

The First Nation has issued a news release saying it met with federal officials about a commercial herring gillnet fishery in its territory Wednesday afternoon but failed to reach an agreement.

Kelly Brown, who directs the Heiltsuk's resource management department, says the industry took 680 tons out of the same area with a recent seine fishery, and a gillnet fishery "would only add insult to injury."

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans opened the herring-roe seine fishery near Bella Bella on Sunday, saying there is enough stock to support the harvest.

In an email statement Thursday, DFO spokesman Dan Bate said science forecasts have shown that Pacific herring stock abundance supports a modest commercial harvest.

Science would, in fact, support a 50 per cent higher harvest rate," the statement said. The Heiltsuk Nation said it has received strong statements of support from neighbouring bands and other aboriginal governments, including a resolution passed by Coastal First Nations on Wednesday condemning the actions of the department of fisheries.

Chief Coun. Marilyn Slett said she feels the nation has exhausted all means of negotiation with the DFO and it is now prepared to protect the herring "by any means necessary."

"We are saddened that it has come to this, but we cannot stand by while DFO uses flawed science to destroy a resource we have depended on for thousands of years," she said in a release.

“If we don’t protect the herring, who will?” Fisheries and Oceans Canada said it respects the right to protest, but condemns any threat of violence or reprisal against those exercising their right to take part in a lawful and sustainable fishery.

The Heiltsuk Nation is the latest aboriginal band on B.C.’s coast to speak out in a long-standing dispute over the sustainability of the herring fishery.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/Heiltsuk+First+Nation+vows+protect+herring+fishery+means+necessary/10922345/story.html>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

My Little Corner of Canada, March 20

Resource Development

JOHN AMAGOALIK, March 20, 2015 - 11:49 am

During the 1960s and early 1970s, resource exploration and development in the Arctic was pretty much uncontrolled.

The resource companies did whatever they wanted to do, with the blessing of the Government of Canada. There was little concern for the environment or wildlife. The Inuit and their concerns were ignored. There were little or no benefits for the communities.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, resource exploration and development came to a standstill while Inuit and governments were busy negotiating land claims settlements.

Now that all Inuit regions in Canada have signed and are now implementing their land claims agreements, resource exploration and development activities are once again picking up.

In Nunavut, the institutions of self-government are now in place. The Nunavut Water Board, the Nunavut Planning Commission, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and the Nunavut Impact Review Board are functioning. Inuit organizations are now able to negotiate impact and benefit agreements with resource companies.

In the Qikiqtani region, which has the most diverse environment in Nunavut, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association has been busy negotiating the creation of national parks and wildlife conservation areas throughout a vast region stretching from southern Hudson Bay to Ellesmere Island near the North Pole.

The Inuit are now in a much better position to have more control over and benefit from resource development.

We can insist on better protection for the environment and wildlife. We now have Inuit business entities and entrepreneurs who can take advantages of business opportunities. The vision of Inuit leaders in the 1970s are now beginning to take shape.

We have a young and growing population. They need jobs. We need to develop an economy and a tax base in Nunavut. It is a reality we must face.

Now, we need to take the next step. We need a good devolution agreement with Ottawa to open the way to the future.

An obstacle stands in the way. This obstacle is called colonialism and it resides in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

This Corner Quotes

“We need resource development.”

— Peter Tapatai, an entrepreneur in Baker Lake.

An Observation

The Montreal Canadiens could win the Stanley Cup this year. If the (Carey) Price Is Right.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674my_little_corner_of_canada_march_20/

Aboriginal band near Williams Lake enacts laws to govern territory after historic court win

THE CANADIAN PRESS March 20, 2015



Chief Roger William of Xeni Gwet'in speaks at a news conference where UBCIC chiefs react to a Supreme Court Decision on the aboriginal title appeal, in Vancouver June 26, 2014.

WILLIAMS LAKE - A British Columbia aboriginal nation granted rights and title by Canada's high court has introduced its own laws governing its territory and resources within the area.

The Tsilhqot'in National Government has enacted the so-called Nemiah Declaration that prevents mining and commercial logging, stops commercial road building and requires visitors to get permission before entering the land.

The Tsilhqot'in Nation, located west of Williams Lake in the B.C. Interior, was granted 1,750 square kilometres of land in a Supreme Court of Canada decision last June.

The nation first created the declaration in 1989 in response to the threat of widespread clearcut logging, prompting years of negotiations that culminated in the high court's ruling.

In a news release issued Friday, tribal chairman Chief Joe Alphonse said the law comes straight from the nation's people and elders.

"There will be many more laws and policies to come as we strive as a nation to express our values, our culture and our vision for the future on our declared aboriginal title lands and throughout our territory."

The declaration states that the area is the spiritual and economic homeland of the people and they will continue to carry out traditional rights of hunting, fishing, trapping and the tradition of native medicine, religion and sacred and spiritual ways.

"We are prepared to enforce and defend our aboriginal rights in any way we are able," the document says.

Tsilhqot'in government vice-chairman Roger William said the nation is proud of its first law on title land and the goal has always been to enact such rules in current times.

"With this comes challenges, but setting the stage for governance, for good governance, is one of our first priorities," William said in a statement.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/metro/Aboriginal+band+near+Williams+Lake+enacts+laws+govern/10906669/story.html#ixzz3VDzqqazs>

Pehdzeh Ki First Nation threatens to block GNWT fibre optic line

Action is in response to broken-down Dehcho land claim negotiations, says Wrigley chief

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 20, 2015 11:10 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 20, 2015 3:55 PM CT



Pehdzeh Ki First Nation chief Tim Lennie says the GNWT will not run a fibre optic line through their traditional territory until the Dehcho land claim impasse is resolved. (File photo)

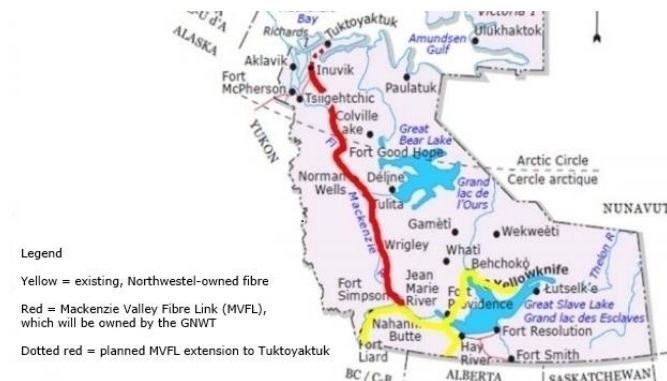
The Pehdzeh Ki First Nation has threatened to block the Government of Northwest Territories' installation of a fibre optic line through their community of Wrigley, N.W.T., as a response to GNWT "bully tactics" during land claim negotiations.

"We will not be able to accommodate nor support this project crossing over asserted traditional lands till such time the GNWT resolves the impasse with the Dehcho First Nations," says Pehdzeh Ki First Nation Chief Tim Lennie.

"I'm very disappointed in the government's inability to adequately deal with our land rights issues. We've been given a take it or leave it offer from the government that we do not support."

Ledcor, the company that is building the fibre optic line for the territorial government, says the installation of the portion of the line running from McGill Lake to Wrigley isn't planned to start until July.

When asked what will happen when the fibre optic team arrives in the community, Lennie said, "They're just not welcome.



A map of the proposed route for the NWT fibre optic line, which passes through the Pehdzeh Ki's community of Wrigley.

"If they want to continue to come and push their fibre optics links, we'll see what happens."

Last week, Dehcho First Nations Grand Chief Herb Norwegian called the territorial government's negotiations with the First Nations an "ultimatum."

The territorial government offered the Dehcho First Nations 37,000 square kilometres of their traditional territory, with only surface rights, as well as royalties of about 18 per cent on the land. The Dehcho are asking for 50,000 square kilometres of land, with surface and subsurface rights.

In a letter to the Dehcho, the territorial government said that's as flexible as it can be, and if that offer isn't good enough, then both parties should "acknowledge that negotiations have failed."

The Dehcho Process, which is the name of the ongoing land claim negotiations, has been going on since 2001. In 2012, the Pehdzeh Ki walked away from the negotiations, stating that nothing had happened since day one of the process.

In January of this year, the territorial government began work on an \$82 million fibre optic cable, designed to bring high speed Internet to communities across the N.W.T. The proposed route for the line, which will measure between 1,100 and 1,200 kilometres and run along the Mackenzie Valley all the way to the Arctic Ocean, goes through Wrigley.

Lennie has written a letter to the government indicating the fibre optic project will not proceed, and Pehdzeh Ki representatives have told Government of the Northwest Territories employees they are no longer welcome in the First Nation's traditional territory.

"Devolution seems to be a mistake," says Lennie. "The GNWT is drunk with power. They need to adjust their views and recognize that the Dehcho Dene are the owners of

our land. We are prepared to negotiate a fair agreement with them, but these bully tactics make it very difficult to see a way forward other than through the courts."

In an emailed statement, the Government of the Northwest Territories says it "does not feel that allegations exchanged in the media is serving the people of the Dehcho well.

"We have made a generous offer to the DFN that is consistent with previously settled claims throughout the N.W.T. and encourage them to consider it. Details of that offer have been made public in the interests of clearing up confusion and misinformation about the GNWT offer, but we believe that negotiations should be conducted in a forum specifically intended for that purpose."

Ledcor, the company constructing the fibre optic line, says the cable build won't be in the Wrigley area for months. This summer's installation work is slated to start at McGill Lake and end at Wrigley, with work beginning in July.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/pehdzeh-ki-first-nation-threatens-to-block-gnwt-fibre-optic-line-1.3003049>

Heiltsuk First Nation says commercial herring fishery violated constitutional rights

Heiltsuk claim Fisheries and Ocean Canada's method of measuring herring stocks is flawed

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 23, 2015 5:35 AM PT Last Updated: Mar 23, 2015 4:17 PM PT



A fishing boat pulls in a net full of herring on the Central Coast of B.C. (Heiltsuk First Nation)

The [Heiltsuk First Nation](#) on B.C.'s Central Coast says when [Fisheries and Oceans Canada \(DFO\)](#) opened a herring fishery on Sunday afternoon it violated the band's constitutional rights.

According to a statement released by the Heiltsuk, just before 5 p.m. PT the federal department opened the herring sac roe seine fishery in Spiller Channel, despite the First Nation's demands the commercial fishery remain closed this year to preserve herring stocks.

“This action shows blatant disrespect of aboriginal rights by DFO and industry,” said Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett.

Last week the Heiltsuk declared a tribal ban on commercial sac roe fishing in all of Area 7, including Spiller Channel where the fishery was opened on Sunday.

The First Nation said fisheries officials only told them about the opening half an hour after it began on Sunday.

“DFO provided inconsistent and misleading communications throughout the day and did not attempt meaningful consultation,” said Slett.

The First Nation is vowing to fight any further openings.

“We must put conservation first. We have voluntarily suspended our community-owned commercial gillnet herring licenses for this season to allow stocks to rebuild, but DFO and industry are unwilling to follow suit,” said Kelly Brown, director of the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department, in a statement released on Monday morning.

"We don't trust DFO science"

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) said its forecasts show herring abundance continues to support modest commercial harvest opportunities.

Spokesman Dan Bate said herring roe fisheries are opened in local areas in consultation with industry advisers.

"DFO continues to have dialogue with the members of the local First Nations. DFO Conversation and Protection Officers have been speaking with commercial harvesters on the water to ensure the fishery is conducted in a sustainable and orderly manner," he wrote in an e-mail to the Canadian Press.

"DFO respects the right to protest, however we condemn any threat of violence or reprisal against those exercising their right to practice a lawful and sustainable fishery."

Greg Thomas, the chair of the [Herring Industry Advisory Board](#), said there are plenty of fish and if there is a Heiltsuk blockade, he expects police to intervene, but adds that the board prefers to negotiate an agreement.

But the Heiltsuk claim herring stocks are on the verge of collapse.

"We don't trust the DFO science." said Carrie Humchitt, the First Nation's legal advisor. "It's very industry driven."

In the meantime the First Nation is working with its own team of advisors to establish its own measure of how Pacific herring stocks are doing in B.C. waters.

The Heiltsuk Nation is the latest aboriginal band to speak out with warnings of perilously low stock numbers in a long-standing battle against the reopening of commercial herring fisheries.

The Haida Nation recently won [an injunction](#) to block a planned fishery, after joining two other First Nations to fight a fishery's reopening last year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/heiltsuk-first-nation-says-commercial-herring-fishery-violated-constitutional-rights-1.3005000>

Province nixes George Abbott appointment to First Nations Treaty Commission

by [Barb Brouwer - Eagle Valley News](#)

posted Mar 25, 2015 at 6:00 AM

An 11th hour decision by the province to veto George Abbott's appointment as chief commissioner has clouded the First Nations Treaty Commission with controversy.

Six months ago, former Shuswap MLA and cabinet minister George Abbott was invited by John Rustad, minister for aboriginal relations, to take on the role of chief commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission upon the retirement of Sophie Pierre.

Abbott had accepted the request and began preparing for the job which was to have begun April 1 by putting his business affairs on hold.

He had First Nations and federal support and believed BC Cabinet approval was forthcoming, albeit in a much slower fashion than anticipated.

But last Wednesday and already in transition talks with the commission, Abbott received a call from Rustad informing him he had been unable to secure cabinet approval.

A former member of the BC Liberal cabinet, Abbott twice held aboriginal portfolios.

He says he was shocked and disappointed by cabinet's last-minute refusal.

“It’s not what I expected to hear,” he said, explaining First Nations ratified his appointment in October and the federal government was ready to add their approval, pending a nod from the province. “I checked with the minister (Rustad) on a number of occasions, obviously concerned when I didn’t hear anything after a couple of months.”

But Abbott, who ran against Premier Christy Clark in the 2013 election, says he was continually reassured his appointment was in process and the delay was not about him personally.

“Now I think it probably was about me; that would be my best guess,” he says. “No one has said that, but I have to assume it.”

With a passion for First Nations issues and expertise garnered in his provincial tenure and doctoral level studies, Abbott says the appointment would have been more than a job.

“Once one understands the aboriginal history in Canada, it is difficult not to agree governments and society have some responsibility for remediating the impact of historical destructive policies,” he says, noting his great grandparents acquired land on the Prairies through the process of preemption, while First Nations got reservations and were excluded from politics and law until 1960. “I, at least, recognize I have to do whatever I can, whenever I can, to remediate those destructive policies.”

Abbott has received a wave of support – including the province’s NDP Party, who called for his immediate reinstatement.

“I have heard from number of aboriginal leaders, who are quite disappointed and, in some cases, quite distressed,” said Abbott.

Shock and support have also been offered in the Shuswap.

Cindy Derkaz, North Okanagan-Shuswap federal Liberal candidate, says she was disappointed.

“Six months ago we heard he had been approached and I thought he would be absolutely excellent,” she says, lauding Abbott’s experience, knowledge and reputation. “George is held in high regard and did a lot of good stuff... I think it’s a loss for the treaty process.”

Roxena Goodine, Abbott’s constituency assistant from 2001 until 2013 when he retired from government has also fielded angry comments.

“George had the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs for a period of time and the natives all respected him, including the local ones,” she says. “He got along with them really well, he understood the portfolio, understands what’s going on, and would have been the best person for it.”

Grateful for the outpouring of support, Abbott says he is sad rather than angry and more concerned about how the treaty process will play out.

“This is not for me a personal loss; this for me is a great disappointment,” he said. “This is something I very much wanted to do, on a file I feel very passionate about and one I won’t be assisting in moving forward.”

Abbott has left the door open by saying if the province reconsiders, he would accept the post.

“In many instances I might be disappointed enough to say ‘no, I’m moving on,’ but in this case, I feel a responsibility for taking these files forward,” he says, calling the treaty process a historical mission. “And I still want to do it. If I am invited three months from now or three years from now, I would take it on.”

The province meanwhile has said nothing other than to issue a press release Friday, saying the government “will work with the principals to appoint a chief commissioner and ensure that the work of the BC Treaty Commission goes on.”

Direct Link: <http://www.eaglevalleynews.com/news/297442801.html>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Valcourt used unreleased RCMP data to claim Aboriginal men responsible for majority of murders of Aboriginal women: Chiefs

[National News](#), [Uncategorized](#) | March 25, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) | [3 Comments](#)

Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said during a private meeting in Calgary last Friday that unreleased RCMP data shows Indigenous men were responsible for 70 per cent of murdered Indigenous women cases, according to two chiefs who were at the meeting.

Valcourt met with Treaty 7 Grand Chief Charles Weaselhead, who chaired the meeting, Treaty 8 Grand Chief Steve Courtoreille, and Treaty 6 Grand Chief Bernice Martial last

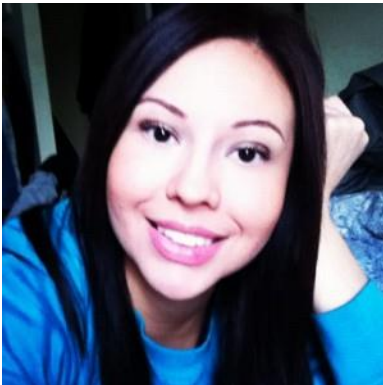
Friday in Calgary at the Delta Bow Valley Hotel. There were about 20 people in the room during the meeting including Lubicon Lake Band Chief Billy Joe Laboucan.



Martial and Laboucan told *APTN National News* on Tuesday evening Valcourt said that according to the RCMP's statistics, Indigenous men were responsible for 70 per cent of the murders of Indigenous women.

"He said that 70 per cent of the murdered and missing women is by Native men, that is what he stated right at that meeting," said Martial.

"He said that yes," said Laboucan. "It was something that he quoted saying it was an RCMP investigation and that it was perpetuated by Native men, the deaths or the murders."



Bella Laboucan-McLean.

Laboucan's daughter [Bella Laboucan-McLean's](#) death is still unsolved. She fell 31 floors from a Toronto condo in the early morning hours of July 20, 2013, during a small party with three men and two women present. None of the men in the condo were First Nation, Metis or Inuit.

Laboucan said he approached Valcourt in the hallway after the meeting to share his first-hand experience with the subject.

"I guess what it boils down to is that 30 per cent is perpetuated by non-Aboriginal males," said Laboucan.

He would like the RCMP or Valcourt to release the full report on the numbers.

“I would like to see that report myself and see how accurate those statistics are,” he said.

Martial said she demanded Valcourt release the full report during the meeting, but the minister didn’t respond.



Chief Bernice Martial/File Photo

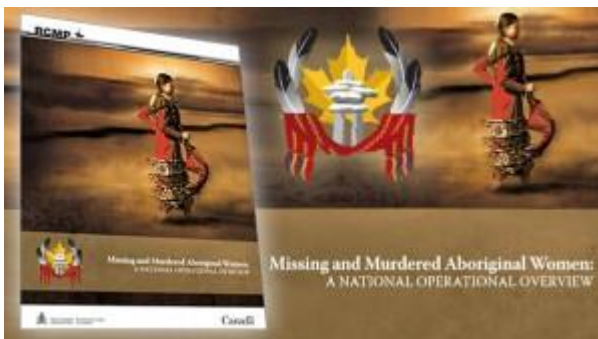
“I stated to him that I wanted proof of what he just stated to me. He said 70 per cent. So I said, ‘I want those stats from you.’ He did not say anything to me after that.”

Martial and Laboucan’s statements are supported by a source who was present at the meeting but requested anonymity. *APTN National News* also obtained notes written by a second source during the meeting that also back the chiefs’ claims.

Valcourt appears to have quoted a statistic from an unreleased portion of the RCMP’s data set on murdered and missing Indigenous women. Valcourt told the grand chiefs he could reveal the statistic because “there is no media in the room,” according to the notes.

The publicly released parts of the [RCMP’s report](#) said Indigenous women were killed by an acquaintance in 30 per cent of the reviewed cases. Nowhere in the publicly available part of the report, which was released last spring, does it break down numbers by communities, whether urban centre or reserve, or by ethnicity.

In an interview with *APTN National News* in December 2013, [RCMP Supt. Tyler Bates](#) said only some of the findings would be released publicly from a review of cases from 200 police departments dating back to 1980.



According to notes of the meeting, Valcourt mentioned the statistic while responding to concerns raised by the grand chiefs over remarks the minister made in the press last December. Valcourt essentially blamed First Nation men for the majority of 1,181 murdered and missing Indigenous women cases.

Treaty 8 Grand Chief Courtoreille told Valcourt that he took the minister's statement personally, according to the notes. Valcourt initially denied he made the statement. Then Martial read the Dec. 12, 2014, Ottawa Citizen article aloud to the minister where he is quoted saying First Nation men had "a lack of respect" toward women on reserves, according to the notes.

Valcourt then told the grand chiefs, "We all need to deal with it."

Courtoreille also raised the unsolved murder case of [Amber Alyssa Tuccaro](#) who is from his home community of Fort Chipewyan.

Valcourt reiterated the government's position against holding a public inquiry while repeating 40 studies have already been done on the issue, according to the notes. He told the grand chiefs colonialism, residential schools, poverty, lack of housing and lack of education all contribute to the level of violence, according to the notes.

The minister's office refused to confirm or deny the version of events contained in the notes and stated by the two chiefs.

"Last week, the minister did a tour of the prairies and met with several First Nations to discuss a wide range of issues," said a statement from Valcourt's office. "While we don't disclose specifics of closed-door meetings, the discussions were productive and our government will continue to work with First Nations to address these issues."

Martial said Valcourt took an aggressive posture during the meeting, cutting off speakers and forcing chiefs to raise their voices.

"He was the aggressor, just like when a person always tries to overpower us and when we spoke he tries to overpower us," she said. "I just addressed my concerns to the point where I had to raise my voice for him to listen to me. That is the only way I got things across to him."

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/25/chiefs-say-valcourt-used-unreleased-rcmp-data-claim-indigenous-men-responsible-majority-indigenous-women-murders/>

Cindy Gladue case sends a chilling message to indigenous women

SARAH HUNT And NAOMI SAYERS

Contributed to The Globe and Mail (includes correction)

Published Wednesday, Mar. 25 2015, 8:29 AM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Mar. 25 2015, 3:29 PM EDT

Dr. Sarah Hunt is a member of the Kwagiulth band of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation. She is a scholar and advocate who has worked for more than 15 years on Indigenous anti-violence and justice initiatives; Naomi Sayers is an Anishnaabe Kwe, indigenous feminist and sex work activist with experience working in the sex trade in various places in Canada, including northern Ontario. She writes at kwetoday.com.

The logic usually goes that if someone admits to injuring another person to the point that those injuries contribute to their death, the law will respond by convicting that person of a crime – the crime of murder, or manslaughter, if intent to kill cannot be proven. Not so, it seems, for indigenous women like Cindy Gladue.

Last week, a jury of nine men and two women in Edmonton found Bradley Barton not guilty of Cindy Gladue's murder, despite evidence that he had caused the wound that led to her death. The details of the case are too traumatizing to recount in full, but you have to question what is considered justice if an 11 cm wound inside a woman's vagina that results in her bleeding to death is not evidence enough that a crime was committed.

The details of the trial indicate how mechanisms within the justice system can be used to normalize violence against indigenous women. The violence they experience often seems to lie beyond the arms of the law: Violence with impunity; murder without fault. The illogics run deep, yet to indigenous women, they sound all too familiar.

The courtroom treatment of Cindy's body is just one efficacious expression of the dehumanization of indigenous people – especially indigenous women – by processes of Canadian law.

Her preserved pelvis was brought into court. On a screen, the wound to her vagina was displayed as proof of her dehumanized status. Is there any reason the jury needed anything more than hard copy photos of the wound? Indigenous peoples bodies have been treated as specimens for centuries, though usually not in murder trials these days.

This treatment of Ms. Gladue demonstrates just how a 36-year old mother can be imagined as different from the jurors' own mothers, and how the stigma of her work in the sex trade, her indigeneity and her womanhood all combined to naturalize her death as routine by jury. It was well established that Ms. Gladue met Mr. Barton in the context of her work in the sex trade. She met with him twice and camera evidence was presented showing the two of them entering the hotel room where she later died.

Mr. Barton said her death was due to consensual rough sex – even though in our view she could not give consent since her blood alcohol level was four times the legal limit. He

admitted to his actions, but he said he didn't mean it. The jury has sent a message that killing an indigenous woman is acceptable. How many more deaths will it take before the system is compelled to change?

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other politicians have focused on improved policing as a key element of increasing safety for indigenous women. Yet we can see that legal violence comes from many sources, not only from police. How can native women be expected to turn to a system in which racism, sexism, and stigma against sex workers runs rampant. The criminalization of prostitution conspired to make the victim's sex work experience the origin of the violence she faced instead of placing fault in the violent actions of the assailant. If the defence concedes that Mr. Barton committed the acts that contributed to Cindy's death, the fact that money changed hands does not magically nullify the act. An acquittal should not have been an option.

While Cindy's family has been mourning her death for four years, this week should be one of mourning for all Canadians. Mourning for Cindy Gladue. Mourning missing and murdered 1,200 Indigenous women and girls. And mourning the loss of any illusion that there ever was justice for racialized women in this country.

Mr. Harper has said the legal system is equipped to address the murders of native women. We have seen just how the law treats these deaths. Indigenous leaders – and by that we mean community advocates, not elected officials – continue to call Mr. Harper's message out for what it is: a lie. There is no justice for indigenous women. Not for Cindy Gladue. Not for the thousands of our loved ones.

Imagine a world where all indigenous women, in life and in death, were treated with the utmost respect. Imagine a world where a woman's value was not dependent on how she makes a living. Cindy Gladue is a person worthy of justice, as all of us are. Many Indigenous women are expressing outrage that her life seems so expendable in the eyes of the law. Who will join us in continuing to seek justice for Cindy Gladue?

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article incorrectly said the jury hearing the case in the death of Cindy Gladue was comprised solely of white men. In fact, the jury included white and non-white jurors with 9 men and two women. The article also said that Ms. Gladue's vaginal tissue was passed around in court to show the wound. In fact, the jury saw live images on an overhead projector with pathologists showing the tissue, which was behind an opaque screen. The article also said it was impossible for her to consent given her blood alcohol level was four times the legal limit. In fact, the judge told the jury that they should consider whether Ms. Gladue had the capacity to consent or not because of her consumption of alcohol.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/cindy-gladue-case-sends-a-chilling-message-to-indigenous-women/article23609986/>

U of R tackles issue of missing and murdered indigenous women

The university is holding a four-day symposium on its campus and at First Nations University.

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 24, 2015 5:12 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 24, 2015 5:12 PM CT



Students and teachers discuss issues surrounding missing and murdered indigenous women at a four-day symposium at the First Nations University. (Ntawnis Piapot (CBC))

The University of Regina is tackling the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women this week with a series of panels and discussions.

The school is holding a four-day symposium on its campus and at First Nations University.

It'll be discussing questions such as, "how are we learning about missing and murdered indigenous women?" and "how are we teaching about missing and murdered indigenous women?"

Dr. Shauneen Pete, Lead for Indigenization at the U of R, said there's been more activism surrounding this issue and she hopes events like this one will further educate others about missing and murdered indigenous women.

"Like many other communities right across Canada, Native and non-native people are coming together to say we need to talk about this and certainly here in our community, the U of R and First Nations U, it was a topic that drew us together."



Johannah Bird and Dr. Shauneen Pete discussing ways to teach students about missing and murdered indigenous women. (Ntawnis Piapot (CBC))

Pete said the idea to have this symposium came after Prime Minister Stephen Harper said a national roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women wasn't high on his government's list of priorities.

"There's real mixed messages. We see a lot of activists trying to draw attention consistently year after year about the issues of missing and murdered indigenous women, and at the same time we have a federal government who just dismisses it as a problem," she said.

There will be panel discussions at the U of R over the next two days. The final event will be held this Friday at the Wesley United Church.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/u-of-r-tackles-issue-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-1.3007969>

Winnipeg police should have protected teen later found dead: AFN chief



Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger, left to right, speaks with Rinelle Harper and AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde as they wait for the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to begin in Ottawa on Friday, February 27, 2015. (Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Published Wednesday, March 25, 2015 1:39PM CST

Last Updated Wednesday, March 25, 2015 6:41PM CST

WINNIPEG -- Canada's top aboriginal leader is accusing police of failing to protect a missing 15-year-old girl in the hours before she was last seen alive.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said Winnipeg police didn't do their job when they came into contact with Tina Fontaine days before her body was pulled from the Red River wrapped in a bag.

Fontaine was in a vehicle pulled over by two officers more than a week after she was reported missing from foster care last August, but she was not taken into custody.

The Winnipeg Police Service said Tuesday neither of the officers will face criminal charges. One has been suspended without pay; the other is on paid administrative leave while the disciplinary process unfolds.

"They should have done their job," Bellegarde said following a speech in Winnipeg on Wednesday. "They are there to serve and protect our people."

Fontaine's death touched a nerve across the country and reignited calls for a national inquiry into nearly 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women. Families of some of those women, along with volunteers, took to the Red River in their own boats to dredge the water in the hope of finding answers police have been unable to provide.

There is a growing frustration with the justice system's approach to missing and murdered aboriginal women, Bellegarde said. The way Fontaine's disappearance was handled is "not accepted in today's society," he said.

"We've got to make sure we learn from the past and not make the same mistakes going forward," Bellegarde said. "When it comes to missing and murdered indigenous women

and girls, they're equally as important and valuable. Their lives are equally as important as everybody else's.

"They should not be forgotten and put to the side."

The Assembly of First Nations has called for an independent probe on how police handled Fontaine's disappearance. A spokesperson for Attorney General James Allum said it would be inappropriate for him to comment while the police are still considering disciplinary action.

Fontaine's relatives have said that a few hours after police came across the girl, she was found passed out in a downtown alley. Paramedics took her to a nearby hospital where she stayed for several hours before social workers picked her up.

Thelma Favel, Fontaine's great-aunt, said the teen was taken to a hotel, but she ran away again the following day. Her body was found more than a week later. Child and Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross declined an interview request but a spokesperson said an internal CFS review into Fontaine's case is ongoing.

Police have ruled her death a homicide but have not revealed how she died. No charges have been laid.

The officers who came across Fontaine could have saved her life and should have been fired on the spot, Favel said.

The union representing the officers said they are already facing unusually harsh treatment. Maurice Sabourin, president of the Winnipeg Police Association, said it's extremely rare to be suspended without pay if there aren't any criminal charges.

The association is concerned intense publicity might be influencing police Chief Devon Clunis, he said.

"It has played a major part in the chief's decision. It is a very political situation," Sabourin said. "We have to keep in mind that the members were not the last people to have contact with Miss Fontaine."

Police declined to make anyone available to comment Wednesday.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg-police-should-have-protected-teen-later-found-dead-afn-chief-1.2297181>

**RCMP won't back Valcourt's claim
Indigenous men responsible for 70 per
cent of Indigenous women murders**



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

The RCMP says it won't release "the ethnicity" of perpetrators responsible for the murders of Indigenous women, contradicting statements made earlier Thursday by a Conservative MP and a spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's office.

"In the spirit of our bias-free policing policy, the RCMP will not be disclosing statistics on the ethnicity of the perpetrators of solved Aboriginal women homicides," said the statement issued Thursday evening.

The RCMP's position contradicts a statement made by Conservative MP Rob Clarke and a spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

Clarke said Thursday the RCMP would be releasing numbers that would show that 70 per cent of the murders of Indigenous women were committed by Indigenous men.

"The information that was gathered (by the RCMP) is raw data," said Clarke, a former RCMP officer, during *APTN's Nation to Nation* political panel. "It hasn't been released yet and it probably will be released once the data is put into report form."

A spokesperson for Valcourt's office, who was present in *APTN's* Ottawa bureau during the political panel's taping, confirmed what Clarke stated and said the information would be released "in due course."

[Valcourt mentioned the 70 per cent statistic last Friday during a closed-door meeting with First Nation leaders in Calgary, according to two chiefs at the gathering. Valcourt said during the meeting that the statistic came from the RCMP, but it had not been made public.](#)

Treaty 6 Grand Chief Bernice Martial demanded Valcourt release the source of his information.

When asked by *APTN* where Valcourt obtained his information, RCMP spokesperson Sgt. Harold Pfleiderer suggested the minister's office was best positioned to answer that question.

"I invite you to contact Minister Valcourt's office," said Pfleiderer.

The minister's office did not return a request for comment as of this article's posting.

NDP Aboriginal affairs critic Niki Ashton pressed Valcourt to release the source of his information during question period Wednesday, but the minister avoided providing a direct answer.

The RCMP statement said the main focus of its public release last May was the "Aboriginal origin of female victims of homicides."

The statement said the RCMP was more interested in the "victim-perpetrator relationship." Its review found that in 62 per cent of Indigenous women murders, the perpetrators were either a spouse, 29 per cent, a family member, 23 per cent, or an intimate partner, 10 per cent. Thirty per cent of the murders were committed by an acquaintance and eight per cent of murders were committed by a stranger.

The RCMP reviewed cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women which were held by about 200 police departments across the country dating back to 1980. The RCMP released some information from the review in a report last year that said there were 1,181 murdered and missing Indigenous women cases across the country.

"These statistics have enabled focused prevention/intervention efforts, guiding and informing future crime prevention and reduction efforts as it relates to family violence in vulnerable communities across the country," said the statement.

During the Nation to Nation taping of the political panel, Ashton said the Conservatives were "race baiting" with the 70 per cent statistic.

"They are absolving themselves from any blame or any responsibility on this issue," said Ashton.

Labrador Liberal MP Yvonne Jones said Valcourt should have publicly released the information before raising it during a private meeting.

"Who the perpetrator is does not change the fact that the government has a responsibility to do an inquiry and get to the bottom of it," said Jones, during the Nation to Nation political panel.

Saskatchewan Senator Lillian Dyck issued a statement saying Valcourt “must show us this unreported data because they contradict other reported facts.”

Dyck said the Native Women’s Association of Canada’s (NWAC) own research found that only 36 per cent of cases were linked to Indigenous men. She said NWAC’s numbers showed that in 41 per cent of cases the racial identity of the perpetrator was unknown.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/26/rcmp-wont-release-new-information-murdered-missing-indigenous-women-cases/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Native Americans Look Beyond Casinos To Marijuana

3/20/2015 @ 12:16PM

Native American tribes are looking to expand their business beyond casinos and into the lucrative cannabis industry.

The Portland Press Herald [reported that three of the states four tribes](#) were considering legalizing marijuana on their lands, but hadn’t gone much further than discussions. One of the tribes is also looking into cultivating marijuana. In California, the Pinoleville Pomo Nation will be the [first tribe to grow medical marijuana](#).

Industry experts have been approached by tribes asking about ways to get involved in the new marijuana field. Derek Peterson, CEO of [Terra Tech](#) (OTC: TRTC) said he’s been approached by six or seven tribes. He’s also meeting with several tribal representative over the next few weeks.



DENVER, CO – MARCH 11: Marijuana grows at 3D Cannabis Center in Denver, March 11, 2015. Colorado pot sales soar to record in January, bringing \$2.3 million for schools. Around \$36.4 million of recreational marijuana was sold this January compared to about \$14.69 million sold the same month last year. (Photo by RJ Sangosti/The Denver Post via Getty Images)

Initially, the tribes went to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to get guidance on whether they could pursue the business. The DOJ issued [a memorandum](#) last October that reviewed their policy on marijuana issues in Indian Country. The memo essentially tells the tribes to go back to the “Cole Memorandum” for guidance. Tracy Toulou, Director of the Office of Tribal Justice at the DOJ did not respond to questions about the memo.

If you are not familiar with the “Cole memo,” it was the DOJ’s way of saying they had other bigger priorities than marijuana. So, various tribes have begun exploring ways to get into the cannabis game. The most obvious would be to grow the plant. Some Indian tribes have already been growing tobacco and rolling their own cigarettes to the consternation of big tobacco companies. The Oneida Indians in New York sold cheaper cigarettes without taxes for years. The state was not too happy about this and after years of legal battles, they reached a settlement in 2013 forcing the Indians to collect sales tax on the cigarettes to non-natives.

The main selling point for the legalization of marijuana in many states has been the influx of millions of dollars in tax revenue. You can only imagine how upset states will be if they see this tax source going up in smoke. It will surely spark more tax legal battles.

Another area that Native Americans are exploring is the banking aspect. It’s well known how difficult banking relationships are for marijuana related businesses. Most of the big banks refuse to work with these business owners. The major credit card companies also have policies against using their cards for marijuana purchases. Having said that, many businesses have found ways to work around around this policy even it’s not approved. However, Native Americans in their sovereign nations are looking at processing credit card transactions and performing other banking transactions. By establishing the banking facility in Indian Country, the banks may be able to avoid the money laundering issue.

Leslie Bocskor, Managing Partner at [Electrum Partners](#) said, “The cultivation and dispensaries are low hanging fruit. I think there is more opportunity in banking.” Bocskor is speaking at a reservation conference in March in Las Vegas and is also speaking to two different groups at this time with regards to cannabis opportunities. One group has already gotten into banks and just needs to organize and structure the transactions.

Another area that Bocskor believes the tribes can capitalize on is the seed market. “Where do you think all these cultivators are getting their seeds today? The black market. The tribes could bring those seeds in and duplicate them and sell them. They could create a monopoly,” said Bocskor.

The flat growth of casinos is one big reason Native American tribes are looking at new sources of income. The [Hartford Courant reported](#) that Connecticut's two tribal casinos Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun had both seen declines from 2013 to 2014 and the decline was blamed on the increase in casino competition. Atlantic City has seen its casino revenue drop by 48% over the past eight years resulting in the closing of four establishments in 2014. Again the blame is placed on too many new casinos being built nearby and the customers can gamble closer to home. This shorter driving distance is also hurting tribal casinos. Since they are located on reservations they tend to be in far flung places. According to the National Indian Gaming Commission, [gaming revenues barely grew](#) from \$27.9 billion in 2012 to \$28 billion in 2013. Granted these are huge numbers, but they aren't growing.

Bocskor noted that Native Americans have never really gotten to extend themselves beyond gaming. "This is their first opportunity. This is going to be a new opportunity to get much more income."

Direct Link: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/debraborchardt/2015/03/20/native-americans-look-beyond-casinos-to-marijuana/>

Health Dept. launches HIV prevention campaign to reach Native Americans

[Lorna Benson](#) · Mar 20, 2015

HIV infection rates for Native Americans in Minnesota are nearly three times greater than they are for whites. In response, the Health Department is launching an HIV prevention campaign to reach American Indians on reservations and in the Twin Cities, coinciding with Friday's [National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#).

State AIDS Director Krissie Guerard said HIV prevention messages will air on cable channels that play in Indian Health Service clinics and in some metro-area clinics that treat sexually transmitted infections.

Guerard said social stigma related to HIV contributes to higher infection rates in Native American communities. She said some people are embarrassed or afraid to be tested and that means they are more likely to spread the disease to others.

"And there's access to health care as well. A lot of infectious disease doctors are more in metro areas and things like that, versus being in some of the areas by the reservations," she said.

Guerard said many Native American communities are offering free HIV testing Friday.

Direct Link: <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/03/20/hiv-prevention-campaign>

Indigeneity or Ethnicity: A Choice That Could Harm Tribal Identities

[Duane Champagne](#)

3/22/15

Ethnicity and indigeneity are two different forms of cultural identity. Indigenous individuals and communities are confronted with choices involving retention of an indigenous identity or choosing a mainstream racial, ethnic or minority status. Based on personal circumstances and an encouraging policy environment from modernizing nations states, many people of indigenous descent choose to abandon indigenous tribal identities. Some take up identities as detribalized indigenous people, or métis as in Canada, mestizos as in Latin American and South America, or as ethnic Indians as in the United States.

The material, political, cultural, legal, and economic forces of the contemporary world are largely predisposed to invite people of indigenous origins to abandon tribal identities and adopt an ethnic identity. An indigenous identity has its center of focus on a tribal nation, or a constructed nation based on internal consent among the Indigenous Peoples of the nation. Indigenous identities focus on or are rooted in kinship, place, land, self-government and holistic institutional and cultural interpretations of the cosmic order. Ethnic Indigenous Peoples have left their indigenous tribal understandings, and generally have moved physically or culturally toward acceptance and participation in mainstream institutions of government, market economy, and kinship.

For many Indigenous Peoples, the choice between ethnic or indigenous identities is not an either/or proposition. Indigenous Peoples increasingly move between tribal and mainstream national worlds. Many indigenous people have become multicultural, and have skills to work and make a living in mainstream nations, while at the same time respect and participate in tribal nations as cultural and political members. Moving between nations and cultures with some ease is at the base of the dual or plural citizenship patterns of the U.S. and Canada.

The formation of ethnic groups of indigenously attached persons are found in many countries around the world. Often indigenous ethnic groupings are more recognizable to nation states, since they are willing to conform to the demands and definitions of national political interest groups. In Canada, Métis form detribalized groups with distinct mixed indigenous and European traditions. The Métis seeks rights that are distinguished from tribal indigenous nations.

In the U.S., there are more people of partial indigenous descent than there are people who identify with a tribal nation. Many ethnic Indians in the U.S. maintain a tribal line of

descent like Cherokee or Choctaw, along with descent from English, Irish or other immigrant nationalities. Many, perhaps most, ethnic Indians have little more than passing interest in contemporary Indian community or nations. An American Indian tribal descent is one of several cultural heritages that are honored, but not lived in everyday life. In Latin America and South America Mestizo identities, another form of indigenous ethnicity, requires that the person or group abandon indigenous tribal identities, as well as culture, language, land claims, and self-government.

The formation of indigenous ethnicities are the result of cultural globalization, strong national policies, and the economic marginalization of indigenous people, all of which puts pressure on Indigenous Peoples to accept the mainstream culture, economic, and political system. Nevertheless, many indigenous nations continue to insist on their own rule of law, recognition of their traditional political forms, power over their own territory and resources, and practice of their own languages and cultures. The post-traditional contemporary world offers choices, and moving to an indigenous ethnic identity is one of those choices.

Indigenous ethnic are an emergent part of the world order. It, however, is critical whether indigenous ethnicities will defend or destroy indigenous tribal identities and nations. In moving away from tribal identities, if indigenous ethnic groups are going to be hostile, then they will have joined with mainstream forces of assimilation and acculturation that indigenous nations have struggled against for so long, and will continue to do so in the future. Alliances and mutual support among indigenous tribal and indigenous ethnic groups will support achievement of indigenous tribal rights and goals. However, the indigenous ethnic group movement appears to want to abandon tribal community and rights.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/22/indigeneity-or-ethnicity-choice-could-harm-tribal-identities-159617>

Colorado Panel Passes Bill Limiting Native American Mascots

DENVER — Mar 23, 2015, 9:15 PM ET
By IVAN MORENO Associated Press

A proposal debated Monday by lawmakers about the use of Native American mascots by [Colorado](#) schools prompted a tense moment about using slurs for other groups of people as team names.

To make a point of how offensive mascot monikers such as "redskins" can be, the sponsors of a bill limiting the use of such names began their presentation to the House

Education Committee with a slideshow, playing on a loop, with caricatures bearing offensive names for Hispanic, Asian, and black people.

"We wouldn't tolerate these images now, would we?" said Rep. Joe Salazar, a Thornton Democrat who is co-sponsoring the bill.

The images drew a strong reaction from Rep. Rhonda Fields, a black lawmaker on the committee who supports the bill. She said the slideshow was offensive and should be stopped because the sponsors had made their point.

"Rep. Fields, I'm just as offended by it, and I think that's the point," said Rep. Jovan Melton, who is also black. "The point is there's students who have to go every single day to school and see 'savages' or 'redskins' or to see some type image that degrades them."

The bill cleared the committee — its first — with a 6-5 party-line vote with Republicans in opposition. It needs passage by one more panel before going to the full House.

The bill would require public schools with American Indian mascots or logos to get permission for their use from a panel of nine Native Americans.

Only schools that get approval would be allowed to continue using the mascots. Schools that don't get permission would have to stop the use within two years or face a fine of \$25,000 a month.

Opponents of the bill have argued that it would be cost prohibitive for schools to redo logos on uniforms, buses and gym floors. They also argue that it's not their intent to offend, and that for some schools the names are a source of pride.

The bill would create a new state panel called the Subcommittee for the Consideration of the Use of American Indian Mascots by Public Schools. The voting members would review mascot names and decide whether the mascots are offensive.

Rep. Justin Everett said the proposal would be "another burden on school districts."

"Especially the rural school districts who are going to come testify in front of the committee, basically sing for their supper so they're not losing \$25,000," he said.

John Sampson, a board member of the Strasburg School District, home of the Indians, said they have pride and respect in the name.

"Contrary to what has been suggested here today, we do not in any way, shape, form or manner hold American Indians, their culture, their heritage or their values in disrespect," he said.

The movement to ban the use of Native American mascots has gotten greater public attention because of the push to get the NFL's [Washington Redskins](#) to change the name of the team.

At the college level, the NCAA warned more than a dozen schools in 2005 that they would face sanctions if they didn't change Native American logos or nicknames. Some colleges kept the nicknames by obtaining permission from tribes, including the [Florida State Seminoles](#) and the University of Utah Utes.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/native-american-mascots-debate-colorado-29854993>

Nicaragua's Grand Canal: No Indigenous Consent, and Probable Environmental Catastrophe

[Rick Kearns](#)

3/25/15

Even as the chorus of scientific and indigenous complaints grows louder, the earth movers and other equipment have started digging the largest canal in the Americas, one that Nicaraguan officials assert will help ease the dire poverty of the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

However, scientists are warning against the project, and an indigenous community is suing the government of Nicaragua regarding construction of the massive canal that will connect the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, which, according to a growing number of experts, could cause severe environmental damage. Moreover, it was allegedly authorized without prior consultation with affected indigenous communities.

Construction began on the Grand Canal in December. The \$50 billion plan entails digging a 90-foot-deep, 1,1710-foot-wide, 170-mile-long trench that will skirt rainforests and cut through Lake Nicaragua, the largest drinking water reservoir in the region.

Along with growing scientific concerns regarding the canal are lawsuits filed by the indigenous communities of Miskitu of Tasbapouni, Kriol, Monkey Point and of the Black Indigenous Creole communities of Bluefields of the Autonomous Region of the Southern Caribbean (ARSC). The indigenous and Afro Nicaraguan peoples who live in the region first filed suit in 2013 in Nicaragua's Supreme Court to contest Law 840, which allowed the government to award the canal contract to the HKND Group of Hong Kong without consulting the affected communities or issuing environmental impact studies that normally are required for any construction project in Nicaragua. In December 2013 the court ruled the law to be constitutional. The indigenous communities then took their fight

to the Inter American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR). In November 2014 the IACHR agreed to consider the affected communities' petition for protective measures.

"The Territorial Rama and Kriol Government has presented a petition for protective measures to the IACHR, but it also petitions the Nicaraguan State to not initiate construction until the State complies with its international obligation to engage in a free, previous and informed consent with the Indigenous Rama and Kriol communities," the Territorial Rama and Kriol Government said in a statement in January.

Indigenous Peoples are joined by numerous scientists in their concern over possible environmental and cultural impacts. Many scientists wonder what will become of the lake, given that its 50-foot-deep bed will be dredged to accommodate the 90-foot depth needed for the canal, which would basically bisect the 56-mile-wide body of water. In December, scientists Jorge Huete-Perez, president of Nicaragua's Academy of Science, and Axel Meyer, a professor of zoology and evolutionary biology in Germany, wrote about potential affects on the lake from the canal project.

"The extensive dredging required would dump millions of tons of sludge either into other parts of the lake or onto nearby land," the scientists stated. "Either way, the sludge will probably end up as damaging sedimentation."

Further, the project entails constructing dams "in an area of frequent seismic activity, which would increase the risk of local water shortages and flooding," Perez and Meyer wrote. "The lake would probably suffer from salt infiltration in the lock zones, as in locks of the Panama Canal. This would transform a free-flowing freshwater ecosystem into an artificial slack-water reservoir combined with salt water. Declining populations of native aquatic fauna...could also suffer."

The result would be probable environmental catastrophe, they warned.

"In our view, this canal could create an environmental disaster in Nicaragua and beyond," the scientists wrote, citing the destruction of 400,000 hectares of rainforests and wetlands. "The accompanying development could imperil surrounding ecosystems."

For instance, they said, a mere 150 miles north of the most likely route of the canal lies the 7,722-square-mile Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, "tropical forest that is the last refuge of many disappearing species."

Perez and Meyer were also part of a team of 21 scholars from the U.S. and Latin America who co-authored an article explaining potentially negative consequences of the canal.

"The biggest environmental challenge is to build and operate the canal without catastrophic impacts to this sensitive ecosystem," said environmental engineer Pedro Alvarez of Rice University in Texas, adding that even with the best of intentions, it would be hard to avoid wide-scale environmental destruction. "Significant impacts to the lake could result from incidental or accidental spills from 5,100 ships passing through

every year; invasive species brought by transoceanic ships, which could threaten the extinction of aquatic plants and fish, such as the cichlids that have been evolving since the lake's formation; and frequent dredging, impacting aquatic life through alterations in turbidity and hypoxia, triggered by re-suspension of nutrients and organic matter that exert a relatively high biochemical oxygen demand."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/25/nicaraguas-grand-canal-no-indigenous-consent-and-probable-environmental-catastrophe>

Can Native American Groups Combat Obesity By Returning To Indigenous Diets?

by [Sam P.K. Collins](#) Posted on March 26, 2015 at 12:35 pm



Change may be on the horizon for Native Americans in the United States, a group suffering from a slew of chronic health conditions stemming from poor diets and food insecurity.

The Shakopee Mdewkanton Sioux Community (SMSC), a federally recognized sovereign tribe based in Minnesota, recently announced the launch of a [philanthropic campaign](#) to improve Native American nutrition. The campaign, named [Seeds of Native Health](#), aims to build awareness of the Native American nutrition problem among members of that population and restore traditional diets with the help of grassroots practitioners, researchers, and advocates.

"Nutrition is very poor among many of our fellow Native Americans, which leads to major health problems," SMSC Chairman Charlie Vig [wrote in press release](#). "Our Community has a tradition of helping other tribes and Native American people. The

SMSC is committed to making a major contribution and bringing others together to help develop permanent solutions to this serious problem.”

While the nation’s ongoing obesity epidemic has touched various groups, it has significantly affected Native Americans. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Minority Health, [nearly one out of three American Indians and Alaskan Natives](#) of all ages are obese. [Half of the women](#) in this group count also count as overweight. The excess weight brought on a host of chronic health conditions, particularly Type II Diabetes, a disease that members of this population develop during their adolescence.

Experts trace the obesity problem to poverty and limited access to fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious food that’s often more expensive than flour and commodity goods. The majority of Native American enclaves in the United States fit the profile of food deserts, defined as low-income areas located further than a mile from a fully stocked supermarket. Residents, in turn, go to gas stations and convenience stores, which are often chock-full of junk food.

“If you’re going to the store and you have no food, you’re not buying endive, you’re buying for your children the thing that’s going to feed as many children as possible and make them feel full,” Suzan Harjo, a member of the Cheyenne and Muscogee tribes and President of the Morning Star Institute, a national Native American rights organization, [told Food Safety News](#) in 2012.

The placement of Native Americans in food deserts didn’t occur by happenstance. Public health advocates have taken into account the [imperialistic campaigns of the early 1800s](#) that relegated Native American tribes to reservations where they had little access to their original food sources and couldn’t engage in an active lifestyle of hunting and gathering. By the end of the 19th century, federal government restrictions on movement and rations of flour, lard, and sugar replaced the indigenous diet of meat, protein, fruits, and vegetables that kept Native American healthy. That change helped bring forth the health crisis among Native Americans today.

In recent years, some Native American populations have sought to turn back the hands of time and raise the nutritional standards in their communities. The University of Kansas’ [American Indian Health and Diet Project](#), for example, connects Native Americans on Minnesota’s White Earth Reservation with wild rice, corn, and other traditional foods. Profits from that project fund the [White Earth Land Recovery Project](#), an effort to preserve original land practices. The University of North Carolina also started gardens through its Healthy, Native North Carolinians project.

There’s also been some legislative progress in this area. Last November, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly [signed](#) the United States’ first junk food tax into law as part of an effort to curb consumption of healthy food and fund wellness projects among the more than 300,000 people living on the reservation that spans three states. The tax, which goes into effect next month, will generate an estimated \$1 million annually for greenhouses,

food processing and storage facilities, traditional food cooking classes, community gardens, and other initiatives to promote healthy eating.

The new food tax, in tandem with a spring 2014 [amendment](#) that removed a five percent tribal sales tax on fresh fruits and vegetables, may help Native American communities engage in discussion about how to best live a healthy lifestyle.

“I’ve been telling the councils, food can either empower us and make us strong, or it can kill us. Healthy food is not just our tradition, it’s our identity. This is the start of a return to food sovereignty,” Denisa Livingston, a community health advocate with the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance (DCAA), a grassroots organization of community volunteers that authored the legislation, [told Mother Jones](#).

Fulfilling the goal of food sovereignty for Native Americans, however, is a huge undertaking that will take an untold number of dollars. Seeds of Native Health, the SMSC’s latest philanthropic effort for Native Americans nationally, represents what’s arguably the largest investment of a previously underserved community.

In a meeting during which leaders announced the initiative, SMSC leaders said that they hope to attract more partners and donors that understand the gravity of the current health epidemic. “We really trust our communities and our people to tell us what they need,” Lori Watso, the tribe’s secretary-treasurer, [told the Minnesota Star Tribune](#). “They may come to us and say that [they] need to actually grow food; they may need to develop educational programs to help their community members understand how to utilize this food.”

Direct Link: <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2015/03/26/3639410/native-american-diet-change/>